



LORD BYRON

1788-1824

BYRON

SELECTED VERSE AND PROSE WORKS
INCLUDING LETTERS AND EXTRACTS FROM
LORD BYRON'S JOURNALS AND DIARIES

*Edited with a comprehensive
Introduction and Notes by*
PETER QUENNELL



COLLINS
LONDON AND GLASGOW

GENERAL EDITOR: G. F. MAITRE, M.A.

First published in this form 1959

Latest reprint 1971

The publishers gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to Messrs. Duckworth & Co. for permission to reproduce in the Introduction to this book certain biographical material from Peter Quennell's *Byron* in the 'Great Lives' series and to the Nonesuch Library Ltd. for permission to use some of the editorial notes prepared by Peter Quennell for their edition of Byron's works.

Selection and Introduction

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
COLLINS CLEAR-TYPE PRESS

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LORD BYRON

A Biographical and Critical Study by

PETER QUENNELL

IN an ideal state of society the modern literary biographer would doubtless lose his livelihood; for the human origins of a work of art would have ceased to arouse the reader's interest and the work itself, being complete and unflawed, would provide its own artistic justification and answer every question that we liked to put. But, then, no work of art is entirely perfect; and there is usually a close connection between its qualities and defects and the artist's private character. Fully to understand a book, we must know something of the mind and temperament that directed the pen; and some writers have been blessed or cursed with an irrepressible personality that overflowed on to every page they wrote and added a strong and distinctive colouring to their whole achievement. Such was Byron, the creator of a personal legend that enflamed the imagination of contemporary Europe, although in some respects it bore little relation to the tastes and sympathies of the real man. Byron's biographer has a difficult task; for not only must he follow the growth of the legend and explain how it originated in the poet's circumstances, but he must show how, once the legend had developed, it helped to disguise his less romantic traits. Both Byron and Childe Harold, from whom spring all his later heroes, are represented in his collected poems and his almost equally brilliant prose-writings. We can only hope to distinguish them, and allow to each his proper value, if we trace the story back as far as his birth and the strange inheritance with which he had entered the world.

It has often been assumed, particularly by foreign critics, that Byron was a headstrong aristocrat, brought up in an atmosphere of power and privilege. Actually, many a prosperous tradesman's son has been more comfortably and extravagantly nurtured. His childhood was wretched and impoverished; his father, a broken-down military spendthrift, his mother a Scotch heiress whom his father

had ruined, provided a setting unquestionably picturesque but neither dignified nor, in the older sense, romantic. Captain Byron died at Valenciennes when his son was three, and from that time until he inherited the barony at the age of ten, on the death of his grand-uncle, 'the Wicked Lord,' the vindictive recluse who lived at Newstead, Byron remained a shabby little boy, in no way different from the children all around him—except that he was more sensitive and less equable. Even then he was perpetually conscious of his lame foot and that his mother was not like other women, that some people laughed at her and some despised her. He knew that she was prone to terrifying rages and to fits of tenderness correspondingly unwelcome.

On the whole, he was not a happy child. Born in the January of 1788, he was the only child of his father's second marriage, and came of an eccentric and disreputable family. All the Byrons tended to inbreed; they were a handsome, impetuous, extravagant race, with a knack of spending money and marrying heiresses. Captain Byron had seduced Lady Carmarthen; of his first marriage the youngest daughter had survived, Augusta, who afterwards married George Leigh. Then he had captured Miss Catherine Gordon of Gight, who was descended from the Royal House of Scotland. Her money proved insufficient to pay his debts; Mrs. Byron's early widowhood and Byron's childhood were passed in a variety of cheerless lodgings, amid an atmosphere of poverty and gloom, which Mrs. Byron's temper made more oppressive. They lived at this period principally in Aberdeen; the Wicked Lord, in his dilapidated Gothic mansion where he had taught the crickets to leave their crannies at the sound of his voice—otherwise he dwelt alone and without friends—took little notice of the boy who was to succeed him, and did his best to ruin and spoil his future inheritance. He cut down five thousand pounds' worth of ancient oaks; when he died in 1798, part of the property had been illegally disposed of, and George Byron, though he was now the sixth baron, was very far from taking his place among the mighty.

He had few sponsors in the world of privilege and fashion; Lord Carlisle, who had been appointed his legal guardian, was so disgusted by a short experience of his ward's mother, her tantrums, her violence and her ill-breeding—of royal descent, she was provincial to the core—that he soon treated both the Byrons, mother and son, with the calm indifference that is reserved for poor relations. Nor could they yet think of inhabiting Newstead; they moved to the adjacent town of Nottingham, and here a truss-maker by the name of

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Lavender was allowed to practise his skill on the deformed foot which he imprisoned in a wooden machine of his own contrivance, painfully twisting and compressing it day by day. We are even told that, during Mrs. Byron's absence, her son lived as a boarder at the quack's house and used to fetch his tankard of beer from across the road. This story may or may not have some foundation; it is at least significant that such an anecdote should have got about.

With the pain was associated a sense of ignominy. Had not Mrs. Byron in one of her periodic rages, when she fell to smashing china and brandishing fire-irons, called the boy to his face a 'lame brat'? There are some things a child always remembers—the insult and perhaps his mother's expression when she realised that her fury had gone too far, the mood of maudlin tenderness which had quickly followed. He was ashamed of his mother in the depths of his being. 'Byron, your mother is a fool,' remarked a blunt acquaintance in the class-room at Dulwich—they had moved to London for the benefit of his health. 'I know it,' he answered with cold conviction. He was never to have an opportunity of thinking otherwise.

Mrs. Byron was a fool, and worse than a fool. All his life it was to be Byron's unfortunate lot to have to do with women who tortured his nerves and refined on his natural irritability. Mrs. Byron was the earliest and most successful. He went to Harrow in 1801, at the age of thirteen, a preternaturally sensitive and difficult boy, bearish or, as he said himself, wolfish, easily offended and easily cast down. He was not happy, he added, till his last years. Newstead, in the meantime, had been let and Mrs. Byron was established not far away in a much smaller house where he spent his holidays. It stood but a short distance from his own estates; three miles from Newstead itself was Annesley Hall, the home of the Chaworths, then occupied by Mary Chaworth and her mother. She was a young girl, only two years older than Byron. He had met her first of all in London, and, during the summer holidays of 1803, had contracted the habit of riding over to Annesley, sending her letters and, rather diffidently, making love. The passion he soon developed had a romantic tincture; Mary was the grand-niece of the man whom his grand-uncle, the Wicked Lord, had killed in a duel, fought by the light of a single candle in a locked room. The estates of Newstead and Annesley lay side by side; the heir and the heiress were young and charming—nothing could have been prettier or more propitious; but Mary Chaworth was in love with Jack Musters.

Certainly, she was not enamoured of Byron. It seems that he was an unattractive adolescent, for a year later he was described by

another young woman as 'a fat, bashful boy, with his hair combed straight over his forehead.' Unlike Jack Musters, he was lame. Did Mary Chaworth call him thoughtlessly the 'lame boy', and was the remark handed on to Byron, whom it sent galloping home in a tempest of grief? Since he himself could never forget his lameness, circumstance conspired to help him remember, in a variety of curious and symbolic episodes. Byron's obsession infected his friends; but all admit that his limp was so unnoticeable that it was hard to decide from which foot it proceeded. It need have played no great part in his story, had Byron's awareness of it been less acute. Few women could put him at his ease; only one woman thoroughly mastered the art, and she was his half-sister, Augusta Byron, the youngest child of his father's first marriage. She lived with various members of her mother's family; apparently it was not till 1801 that brother and sister happened to meet, but from that time a sympathy sprang up between them, the more enduring because its growth was so unobtrusive.

Mary Chaworth represented romantic passion, Augusta the stability of mutual tenderness; and now, in the last stages of his life at school—he left in July 1805—a new and very stimulating type of affection satisfied both his vanity and his need of love. He became the cynosure of boys younger than himself. Delawarr was nine and Clare thirteen; good-looking and extremely passionate children, they surrounded Byron with a wealth of mettlesome hero-worship, and he corresponded and quarrelled with them on equal terms. Years later, he met Lord Clare in Italy. 'I met him,' he wrote, 'on the road between Imola and Bologna, after not having met for seven or eight years. . . . This meeting annihilated for a moment all the years between the present time and the days of Harrow. It was a new and inexplicable feeling, like rising from the grave, to me. Clare, too, was much agitated—more in appearance than even myself; for I could feel his heart beat to his fingers' ends, unless, indeed, it was the pulse of my own which made me think so. . . . We were but five minutes together, and in the public road; but I hardly recollect an hour of my existence which could be weighed against them.' Three other friends, Dorset, Wingfield and Long, died with tragic suddenness in their early twenties, and Byron made a characteristic note of the omen. 'Some curse hangs over me,' he declared—this was at the age of twenty-three—observing that 'even a dog' he happened to be fond of and which—more important—showed signs of being fond of him, he had never been able to keep alive.

He left Harrow at the age of seventeen and a half. Evidently, he

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went down 'under a cloud,' though whence the cloud arose we cannot be sure. He was 'not a proper associate' for Dr. Butler's pupils; we hear that he was bad-tempered and lazy, but was thought to possess oratorical gifts, while he himself tells us that he was a fine swimmer. Mrs. Byron still hated and embittered him. 'Am I,' he wrote, 'to call this woman mother? . . . Am I to be goaded with insult, loaded with obloquy, and suffer my feelings to be outraged on the most trivial occasions? I owe her respect as a Son, but I renounce her as a Friend.' She could not, or would not, understand him; and of real friends, at this period of his life, on whom he might count for intelligent sympathy, except at school, he had pitifully few. At Southwell, where Mrs. Byron lived, he was fond of the Pigots; they were a worthy and charming provincial family, always ready to give him shelter and consolation when his mother's rages forced him to leave home. Elizabeth Pigot encouraged him to write poetry; John Pigot accompanied him to Harrogate; and it was not until he was fully launched as a dandy, and the Byronic legend had begun to muffle him in its dusky folds, that his friendship turned to indifference and neglect.

Byron had been anxious to go to Oxford, but, since there was no vacancy at Christchurch, he made the best of Trinity College, Cambridge. He went up in the October of 1805, and, like many other aspiring undergraduates, spent his first year in comparative obscurity. He was 'so completely alone in this new world' that it half broke his spirits; 'it was one of the deadliest and heaviest feelings of my life that I was no longer a boy.' He had with him an old Harrow friend in Edward Long; the two of them made music and drank soda-water—Byron because he was afraid of growing fat—while five hundred a year and excellent rooms helped to reconcile him to the insidious advance of manhood. He had also an adored and adoring disciple. At Harrow Byron had loved homage, and at Cambridge a young chorister named Edleston, fair, consumptive, humbly born and talented, took the place of Delawarr and Gray. Their intimacy was fervid and sentimental; Edleston gave Byron a cornelian heart, and the young poet considered adopting him as a life's companion—they would 'put "the Ladies of Llangollen" to the blush.' Then the friendship, as such friendships are apt to do, seems to have suffered an unaccountable decline.

Looking back in 1821, from the disillusionment and boredom of Ravenna, Byron described the summer of 1806 as 'the most romantic period of my life.' He had Long's companionship, and was occupied by 'a violent, though pure, love and passion. . . . But already another

Byron had begun to emerge. His residence at Cambridge—from 1805 to 1808—was interrupted in the June of that romantic year by an interval of retrenchment in the country. Extravagance had made it necessary to go down; he swept the faithful Pigot off to Harrogate, where they arrived with a private carriage and two saddle-horses, two men-servants, a bull-mastiff and a Newfoundland. The Byronic *cortège*, as it was to trundle across Europe, is forecast by the composition of that brilliant train.

Soon it had left Pigot behind in the dust. 'Wine and Women,' he wrote to his lawyer, explaining his recalcitrant presence at Southwell, 'have *dished* your humble servant, not a *Sou* to be had; all over; condemned to exist (I cannot say live) at this *Crater* of Dullness till my *Lease of Infancy* expires.' He returned to Cambridge in an idle and truculent mood; though still on occasions awkward and shy, his self-confidence under the tutorship of new friends, among whom John Cam Hobhouse was first and foremost, developed into positive bravado. Oh, to be a hard-bitten man of the world! Byron's acquaintances among his own sex, when not tinged by sentiment or patronage, were with men usually much worldlier than he was himself, whose masculine self-sufficiency he always admired. He was conscious of a decidedly feminine strain. Hobhouse had disliked him in the beginning, had criticised his white hat and his grey coat, glimpsed on the back of a grey horse, but had taken to him when he learned that he had published verses. *Hours of Idleness*, which appeared in the summer of 1807, to be 'praised by reviewers, admired by *duchesses*, and sold by every bookseller of the metropolis,' as its author remarked in a letter to his Southwell friends, gave his personality just the support it had long needed.

To understand the circumstances of Byron's youth and the determining part they were to play in his future development, we must remember not only his hereditary background, with its atmosphere of inbred violence and sudden death, his own lameness, his mother's character, their want of money, but also the extreme precariousness of his social estate. He was neither very rich nor very distinguished; the boy who spent his childhood in shabby lodgings, whose mother was the laughing-stock of their acquaintance—he himself added a wry smile to the general derision—had acquired, as he struggled towards maturity, a galling sense of the consideration that was his due. Was he not, after all, a peer of the realm? Even the volatile Lady Blessington, when she visited him many years later in Italy, was taken aback and now and then a little horrified by the great poet's numerous references to his inherited rank. 'The Old English Baron,'

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as his school-friends called him, never shook off the naïve snobbism of his early days.

2

He 'found himself' at Cambridge in 1808. When we find ourselves, particularly at Oxford or Cambridge, under the influence of the credit system and new friends, the phrase may usually be taken to signify that we have purged ourselves of the last remnants of childish candour; that we have lost our true selves by the adoption of some striking attitude. Byron's was a stranger case than most; for he evinced his genius, not in the process of self-discovery, but in a prolonged and brilliant literary intensification of what had once been a boyish pose. He was an impassioned adolescent all his life; at the same time, so extraordinary were his natural gifts, so abounding, albeit capricious, was his vitality, that the affectation became a thing for men to marvel at, a dramatic feature in the landscape of the modern world.

We left Byron as the author of *Hours of Idleness*. His new friends, Hobhouse, Matthews and Scrope Davies, better poised and less self-conscious than he was himself, helped him to overcome his natural timidity and enjoy the exuberant advantages of a man of leisure. Byron was always vain of his physical prowess; a counterbalance to the limp he could not forget was the fact that he swam and dived with the utmost hardihood, and had been taught boxing by Jackson and fencing by Angelo. The literary rôle alone could never have satisfied him; he must be able to drink with 'Emperors of Pugilism,' have fine horses, though he was not a proficient rider, and a mistress whom he could take to Brighton and parade on the Steyne. He must have dogs, servants, an equipage of his own; its panels were largely emblazoned with the Byron arms and the resounding device: *Crede Biron!* Trust any Byron to spend money, and George Gordon Lord Byron to do his best. . . .

Soon he had wildly over-spent himself. Writing to Hanson, his lawyer, in 1808—he had left Cambridge in the July of that year—he calculated his indebtedness at twelve thousand pounds and suggested that it might be cheaper if he went abroad. Perhaps his desire to travel had a secondary motive; Byron had often visited London and stayed in St. James's Street or Piccadilly, but so far none of the great houses, Devonshire House, Melbourne House and others, where he would have mixed with people of his 'own rank'—an expression he was unconscionably fond of employing—showed any willingness

to open him their doors. Luckily, there was an alternative to shining at home. The Byrons had already produced one voyager, the Admiral known to his colleagues as 'Foulweather Jack,' because his mere presence attracted hurricanes; and his descendant, who had something of the same aptitude—indeed, he greatly surpassed his nautical grandfather, in the frequency and electric violence of the storms he raised—now turned his imagination towards the East.

His plan did not materialise till the following year. Since September Byron had been living at Newstead; the house was tumble-down and scarcely habitable, neglected both by the tenant and the former lord, while the park, stripped bare of its ancient oaks, seemed as desolate and barren as the hills around. He had come of age on January 22nd, 1809; it was in January, too, that he had finally revised for publication his satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which was founded on an earlier satirical essay. The literary merits of this poem must be discussed elsewhere; launched against the pontiffs of the *Edinburgh Review*, who had noticed *Hours of Idleness* with gratuitous spite, it shows for the first time that gift of invective which he had learned from eighteenth-century models. He enjoyed writing it; he enjoyed the laughter it aroused. Otherwise, the interval between Cambridge and the Albanian Tour, which began in the July of 1809, was a bleak and somewhat uneventful period, marked by a little dissipation and much ennui. In November, he lost Boatswain, his Newfoundland dog. Byron's celebration of his favourite's death was highly characteristic of the Byronic temperament and of the affectations and inconsistencies that it enshrined. Boatswain was his only friend, and now he was gone! Yet Boatswain's master, as a critic has pointed out, left England, when he embarked on his Levantine tour, with a complete portrait-gallery of the friends he had made at Harrow, whose miniature likenesses he had specially commissioned. He was also accompanied by the devoted and admiring Hobhouse.

In fact, he was neither friendless nor deeply miserable. It is something to be young and independent, to be the proprietor of a romantic Gothic abbey, as well as a poet whose star has begun to rise. Then, of course, he was uncommonly good-looking; all the Byrons tended to grow fat, but Byron, who had a horror of obesity—it was associated with the waddling presence of Mrs. Byron—usually managed by much exercise and an ascetic diet to keep this hereditary trait under strict control. Five feet eight inches was his full height; he himself added a further half-inch, for in that particular, as in others, he was vain and made a practice of walking upon his toes. A special gait had

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been adopted to conceal his limp; he moved with a curious gliding swiftness, sometimes described as amounting almost to a shamle, and would enter a room 'running rather than walking,' and stop by planting his sound foot on the floor. He had an engagingly melodious and expressive voice. In his hands, white and small and very shapely, he took an aesthetic and aristocratic pride, since they denoted both race and natural distinction. He was proud, too, of his feather-soft chestnut hair; Scrope Davies, his hard-living Cambridge friend, once discovered him in an aureole of curl-papers, fast asleep beneath the curtains of his London bed, and woke him with stuttered cries of 'S-S-Sleeping Beauty!' 'I'm a damned fool!' murmured Byron as he came back to life, but admitted that he was inordinately fond of his curls.

And why not? Byron's head was his chief endowment; from his brain itself was spun the Byronic legend, from the stored-up vitality of dead Byrons; but it was the strange beauty with which they had equipped its corporeal resting-place that gave the legend its greatest power upon mankind. Byron's face was alike intelligent and finely built; the forehead clear and open, the brow boldly prominent, the eyes bright and *dissimilar*, the nose finely cut and the nostril *acutely* formed—the mouth well-formed, but wide, and contemptuous even in its smile, falling singularly at the corners, and its vindictive and disdainful expression heightened by the massive firmness of the chin. Such is the account of a famous portrait-painter.¹ Pride, intelligence and romantic melancholy, distrust of himself and contempt for his fellows—all the characteristics of the legendary Byron were beautifully realised in the Byron of flesh and blood.

Nor was he insensible to his advantages. He had, it is true, a markedly prosaic side which now and then grew impatient of the part he was cast for—he could not be *Childe Harold* shaving and dressing—but, more often, he was careful to see that reality should not fall short of the legend it had brought to birth. Newstead and its Gothic vaults provided his cue; in the spring of the year 1809, when builders and upholsterers had finished repairs, he was able to receive his Cambridge acquaintances in a setting worthy of his imagination. Monastic robes were hired from a theatrical warehouse; Byron himself was elected Abbot; and six or seven cowed and muffled boon-companions—who sometimes included, odd to relate, 'a neighbouring parson'—drank Burgundy from a celebrated skull-cup. It was an authentic cranium, unearthed by a delving gardener; 'a strange fancy' had seized him, Byron said 'of having it set and mounted as a drink-

¹ Sir Thomas Lawrence, quoted by Lord Lovelace.

ing-cup,' and he had 'accordingly sent it to town,' whence 'it returned with a very high polish, and of a mottled colour like tortoiseshell.'

There is also talk of a harem in the Abbey:

*Where Superstition once had made her den,
Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile.*

Biographers, solemnly debating the issue, have come to the conclusion that Byron's finances at this time would not have permitted any such elegant superfluity, and that he must have been referring to the housemaids. Or was it to his London mistress and her friends? . . . At least, that was Byron's view of the revels; desperate, romantic and a little blasphemous, they followed the fine traditions of the Hell Fire Club and continued loud and obstreperous into the night. The young men got up at one o'clock; afterwards, they fenced or played shuttlecock, rode or read or practised marksmanship in the echoing hall—a favourite sport with Byron, who loved pistols. The house party was obviously a vast success, since it left a memory that still follows us today.

Some weeks later, he was at Falmouth, ready to sail. Mrs. Byron had exploded in a final scene which did credit to her vituperative capacity; and from Falmouth he addressed her a final letter, observing that he left England without regret, and without a wish to revisit anything it contained—'except yourself,' he added, 'and your present residence.' Mrs. Byron was then established at Newstead. As to future plans, he might enter 'the Austrian or Russian service—perhaps the Turkish, if I like their manners. The world is all before me. . . .' His letter is dated the 22nd of June; and on the 16th of July he was writing from Portugal, 'having seen all sorts of marvellous sights, palaces, convents, etc.,' in a more volatile and less romantic mood. He had left England, the disappointed man of action; hence the idea of entering foreign service and his picture of himself as a noble mercenary. The doors of the great world were still closed; it was some time before the Newstead party that he had taken his seat in the Upper House, and the neglect, as he conceived it, of his fellow peers—particularly of his guardian, Lord Carlisle, who had refused or omitted to support him—had made an acid impression upon his mind. He was affronted, bitterly aggrieved; Lord Carlisle's attitude had never been friendly, but the young man, with an unexpected touch of prudence, had meant to placate him by a couplet in *English Bards*, referring to his guardian's poetical efforts. Most peers, he wrote, were indifferent poetasters:

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*On one alone Apollo deigns to smile
And crowns a new Roscommon in Carlisle.*

This passage was extensively remodelled:

*Roscommon! Sheffield! with your spirits fled
No future laurels deck a noble head;
No Muse will cheer, with renovating smile,
The paralytic pining of Carlisle.
The puny schoolboy and his early lay
Men pardon, if his follies pass away;
But who forgives the Senior's ceaseless verse,
Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow worse.*

Having thus elaborately avenged his wounded pride and achieved success to the possible detriment of his worldly career—his proposed sponsor would never forgive the insult—prematurely disappointed and disabused, Byron put England and London behind him.

3

Byron's spirits seemed to rise as the distance increased. John Cam Hobhouse was his travelling companion; together they gained Portugal on the Lisbon packet, and settled down to enjoy the strangeness of life abroad. Byron's letters were cheerful and rather slangy: 'I am very happy here, because I loves oranges, and talks bad Latin to the monks, who understand it, as it is like their own,—and I goes into society (with my pocket-pistols), and I swims in the Tagus all across at once, and I rides on an ass or a mule, and swears Portuguese, and have got a diarrhoea and bites from the mosquitoes.' Tomorrow they were to leave Lisbon for Southern Spain, on horseback, 'near 400 miles as far as Gibraltar, where we embark for Melita and Byzantium.' At Cadiz, 'a complete Cythera'—or, perhaps, it was in the city of Seville—he 'made earnest love with the help of a dictionary.' Delightful *passades* blossomed wherever he went; reserve, he told his mother, 'is not the characteristic of the Spanish belles. . . .' One of them, for instance, had just 'honoured your unworthy son with very particular attention, embracing him with great tenderness at parting (I was there but three days), after cutting off a lock of his hair, and presenting him with one of her own, about three feet in length, which I send and beg you will retain till my return. Her last words were, *Adios, tu hermoso! me gusto mucho*—"Adieu, you pretty

fellow! you please me much." She offered me a share of her apartment, which my *virtue* induced me to decline; she laughed, and said I had some English *amante* (lover), and added that she was going to be married to an officer in the Spanish army.'

Such light-heartedness scarcely fits the Byronic legend. In Malta, it is true, he recollected himself, and Mrs. Spencer Smith—the 'Florence' of *Childe Harold*, an ethereal and romantically inclined personage, whose adventures and elopements were common knowledge—became the nucleus of a more literary type of love affair. He challenged one of the officers to fight a duel; the whole episode remained satisfyingly inconclusive, though which of the lovers was the more backward we cannot say—whether it was Florence, or (as he preferred to think) the Childe:

*Fair Florence found, in sooth with some amaze,
One who, 'twas said, still sighed to all he saw,
Withstand, unmoved, the lustre of her gaze.*

Leaving Florence to her chagrin and bewilderment, mirrored in short-sighted azure eyes, Byron and Hobhouse moved on towards the Levant. They penetrated Albania and reached Athens; the northern part of the journey was extremely rough, and Fletcher, Byron's exacting English valet, devoted, querulous and unadaptable, despaired of his life in a violent thunderstorm. Later, they were nearly shipwrecked on the way to Patras; poor Fletcher, whose place in the Byronic drama is that of the clowning servant in an Elizabethan tragedy, once more gave himself up for lost, desperately 'yelling after his wife,' while Byron, with a courage that impressed his friend, wrapped himself in his Albanian capote and fell asleep.

At other times, his behaviour was less dignified. The novelist, John Galt, had joined them in Spain and accompanied them to Sardinia and Malta; and, like Hobhouse, he left a record of his observations. He had first caught sight of Byron at Gibraltar and, though the young man's identity was still unknown to him, had been interested by the dark frown that covered his face. He looked irascible, proud and somewhat sulky. Next day, they had sailed on the same boat, and, whereas Hobhouse, the common-sense man of the world, immediately took possession of their quarters, Byron established himself near the rail, leaning for support on the mizzen shrouds, and inhaled, 'as it were, poetical sympathy from the gloomy rock.' He seemed ill at ease, fretful and capricious. In Sardinia, when they were invited to dine at the Embassy, 'Byron and his Pylades dressed themselves as aides-de-camp—a circumstance,' Galt remarks, 'which did

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not tend to improve my estimation of the solidity of the character of either'; for by temperament he was an extremely solid Scotchman. And yet, like other solid and prosaic characters, he felt the influence of Byron's personal charm.

Did the poet set out to mystify their Scotch acquaintance? Byron's was a histrionic personality, never more sincere than in affectation. He believed—he had always believed—in his own fate; he was conscious that destiny had marked him down—if by destiny we mean atavistic forces, the vital sap of his tormented family-tree, of which he was both terrified and immensely proud—for some tragic, rather dreadful, but touching end. He played Greek chorus, attendant on his own drama; and, although the drama involved his whole existence, and would probably curtail his life itself, he yet relished the dilettante satisfaction of emphasising its more melodramatic qualities. The Byron, whom Galt observed on shipboard, was at once a very young and a painfully experienced man; childish when he attempted to seem worldly, he had had an intuitive glimpse of what the future was storing up.

In the meantime, he was mysterious but absurd. He could be as pettish as a spoiled undergraduate; and then Galt, noticing him on deck, at night among the shadows of the rigging, would experience a much vaguer and wider emotion. 'He was often strangely rapt. . . . Sitting amidst the shrouds and ratlings, in the tranquillity of the moonlight . . . he seemed almost apparitional, suggesting dim reminiscences of him who shot the albatross. He was as a mystery in a winding-sheet, crowned with a halo.' The aura of mystery was not a perpetual accompaniment. He passed ten weeks with Hobhouse at Athens, made love to three beautiful Greek girls—sisters, 'all of them under fifteen'—and set sail for Smyrna on an English sloop. At Smyrna, in the March of 1810, he finished the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*.

Before long we learn that he has swum the Hellespont. It was an achievement that afforded him immense pleasure and to which he was never tired of referring. A couple of months were passed at Constantinople. Byron was in a difficult and vexatious mood; the adventurer who had swum those classic straits, and meditated on the plains where Achilles fell, is next heard of squabbling with one of his countrymen over his right of precedence in a diplomatic ceremony. Stratford Canning, an eye-witness of the contretemps, afterwards described it to Tom Moore, and 'gave a ludicrous account of Lord Byron's insisting on taking precedence of the *corps diplomatique* . . . and, upon Adair's refusing it, limping, with as much swagger as he

could muster, up the hall, cocking a foreign military hat on his head.' Hobhouse adds, that 'it took Byron quite three days' to recover from the nervous effects of this painful scene.

Yet Hobhouse, like Galt, was under his spell. They left Constantinople in July, Byron on his way back to Athens, Hobhouse on the first stage of his journey home, parting sentimentally at the island of Zea. 'Took leave, *non sine lacrymis*, of this singular young person,' Hobhouse recorded in his diary, usually an arid and bookish document, 'on a little stone terrace at the end of the bay, dividing with him a little nosegay of flowers, the last, perhaps, that I shall ever divide with him.' Byron was not sorry to see him go; he was 'woefully sick of travelling companions,' and, no doubt, he was also a trifle weary of the romantic attitudes he felt obliged to adopt for their benefit. He had discovered a new protégé; and, during his stay at Athens, his life, as it was always apt to do, became positively domestic; he lodged in a Franciscan convent near the Acropolis, studied modern Greek and Italian, joked with the Father Abbot and the youths he taught—'six "Ragazzi," all my most particular allies'—while the Albanian laundresses tormented Fletcher. 'In short, what with the *women*, and the *boys* . . . we are very disorderly. But I am vastly happy and childish. . . .' From Athens, he made a second call at Malta, reaching England in mid-July 1811.

He had been away from England two whole years. He brought home with him, among the usual collection of bric-à-brac—tortoiseshell, urns, skulls and a phial of hemlock—the manuscript of a rather tedious satirical poem, *Hints from Horace*, written while he was at Athens, which, he thought, 'would make a good finish to *English Bards*,' and 'a great many stanzas in the Spenserian measure' which he was considerably more reluctant to see published. But a friend assured him of their quality; Dallas, who read the poem with deep enthusiasm, was allowed, after some wavering on Byron's side, to show *Childe Harold*, first to Miller who rejected it, then to Murray who undertook to bring it out.

Meanwhile, Byron had left London. His mother had marked his departure from England with one of her most vituperative scenes; and it was just such a scene—about an upholsterer's bill—that now removed her very suddenly at the beginning of August. She died before her son could reach Newstead. Byron had never been fond of his mother; but family ties had a strong hold on his imagination; all the bitterness of her failure to understand him and of his failure to give her what she wanted—their mutual failure to placate the furies of destiny—seems to have swept back and engulfed him in a flood of

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remorse. Once again, his fate was taking its toll. 'Some curse,' he wrote on August 7th, "hangs over me and mine. My mother lies a corpse in this house; one of my best friends is drowned in a ditch." Matthews had been drowned while bathing at Cambridge. The tragedy was peculiarly horrible, since his friend, a charming and intelligent companion, whom Byron thought 'an intellectual giant,' had been entangled and sucked down by a mass of water-weed, after long and frantic efforts to escape.

The twin catastrophe overshadowed Byron's return. Luckily, the autumn and winter of 1811 when *Childe Harold* was still loitering through the press, brought with them several flattering diversions, such as the acquaintanceship of Lord Holland and Tom Moore. Both gentlemen had been attacked in *English Bards*; Moore wrote him a letter on the subject, and Byron so handsomely made amends—he was already beginning to regret his early squib—that a meeting was arranged through Samuel Rogers. Moore was the older by nine years; the son of a prosperous Irish tradesman, versatile, warm-hearted and perpetually gay, he had long frequented those aristocratic Whig strongholds, Devonshire House, Melbourne House and Holland House, to which 'the Old English Baron' had not attained. He brought out all that was best in Byron's character; his geniality soothed the other's vanity, his goodheartedness allayed his fretful suspicions. Their host was a less reassuring personage; beneath a huge osseous ivory-white forehead, his cold, rather bitter pale-blue eyes watched the limping young man with defensive irony. Rogers' account of the famous dinner is well known: 'When we sat down to dinner, I asked Byron if he would take soup? "No; he never took soup." "Would he take some fish?" "No; he never took fish." Presently I asked if he would eat some mutton? "No; he never ate mutton." I then asked if he would take a glass of wine? "No; he never tasted wine." It was now necessary to enquire what he *did* eat and drink; and the answer was, "Nothing but hard biscuits and soda-water." Unfortunately, neither hard biscuits nor soda-water were at hand; and he dined upon potatoes bruised down on his plate and drenched with vinegar. My guests stayed very late, discussing the merits of Walter Scott and Joanna Baillic. Some days after, meeting Hobhouse, I said to him, "How long will Lord Byron persevere in his present diet?" He replied, "Just as long as you continue to notice it."'

The meeting took place in November 1811. With Tom Moore and Rogers as his friends, Byron had made some progress in Whig society; but when Lord Holland came to visit him, on learning that

lie intended to deliver a speech which attacked the oppressive Frame-breaking Bill, he may have felt that he at last emerged from isolation. He rose to speak on February 27th. There was grave unemployment in the North of England; the stocking-weavers of Nottingham had broken machinery and had been put down with the assistance of regular bayonets. More rigorous means of repression were now proposed; Byron had seen something of industrial England, and what he had seen filled him full of indignant fury. His speech, though not very well enunciated—it was delivered in a somewhat histrionic sing-song—was eloquent, energetic and well composed:

‘I have traversed the seat of war in the Peninsula; I have been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey; but never, under the most despotic of infidel governments, did I behold such squalid wretchedness as I have seen since my return, in the very heart of a Christian country. And what are your remedies? After months of inaction, and months of action worse than inactivity, at length comes forth the grand specific, the never-failing nostrum of all state physicians from the days of Draco to the present time. After feeling the pulse, and shaking the head over the patient, prescribing the usual course of warm water and bleeding—the warm water of your mawkish police and the lancets of your military—these convulsions must terminate in death, the sure consummation of the prescriptions of all political Sangrados. Setting aside the palpable injustice and the certain inefficiency of the bill, are there not capital punishments sufficient on your statutes? Is there not blood enough upon your penal code, that more must be poured forth to ascend to heaven and testify against you? How will you carry this bill into effect? Can you commit a whole country to their own prisons? . . . Will that which could not be effected by your grenadiers, be accomplished by your executioners? . . . With all due deference to the noble lords opposite, I think a little investigation, some previous enquiry, would induce even them to change their purpose. That most favourite state measure, so marvellously efficacious in many and recent instances, *temporising*, would not be without its advantage in this. When a proposal is made to emancipate or relieve, you hesitate, you deliberate for years, you temporise and tamper with the minds of men; but a death-bill must be passed off-hand, without a thought of the consequences.’

His maiden speech was a success, but there was better to come.

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Within a few days¹ of his appearance at the House of Lords, presentation copies of *Childe Harold* were ready for distribution by the poet. A copy, devotedly inscribed, went to Augusta; a second was respectfully tendered to Lord Holland; and very soon an extraordinary blaze of celebrity, almost unprecedented at that or any other time, descended upon the obscure and provincial youth. *I awoke . . . and found myself famous*. Knowing the circumstances of Byron's childhood, it is difficult, as we read those words even today, not to experience a vicarious throb of elation. Fame, success, the promise of happiness, had at length arrived. The young man who had limped his way through Harrow and Cambridge, who had drained life, as he sometimes remarked, to the very dregs, but had been always an undistinguished provincial peer, found the world he coveted suddenly laid at his feet. For several years, he was to be the most famous man of his age, the most flattered, the most commented-on, the most adored; then, until his death, one of the most infamous.

4

Childe Harold is a projection of his own odyssey. Scene after highly coloured scene, cast by the magic-lantern of the Byronic temperament, flashes out in a continuous panorama. The Childe himself usually stalks the foreground. He is 'the gloomy wanderer,' 'the cold stranger' of the narrative, carrying a 'marble heart' wherever he goes and a dark burden of memories and regrets. Behind him are the ruins of past greatness; and just as the splintered columns of Attic temples emerge from the confusion of the squalid present, so we are required to see in the Childe's character traces of nobility to which fate has been unkind:

*For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
Had sigh'd to many though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his. . . .*

Hence his liking for romantic isolation. A hero, made to act and to enjoy, is condemned by disappointment to brood and drift. Willy-nilly, the creator became his puppet. Byron did not welcome the

¹ The actual date of publication is somewhat vague. Moore gives Feb. 29th; other authorities March 10th.

identification—at least, he disclaimed the resemblance in after years—but in 1812 it was natural that he should give way. Unaccustomed to the world in which he found himself, wincingly sensitive to sharp eyes and sharper tongues, he made the most of the air of misanthropy with which he was credited; and the more intransigent his social attitude, the more devastating his impression on the opposite sex.

He was energetically, sometimes brutally, hunted down. Women, in the early years of the Regency, played a part in public and social life, although their public influence was generally illicit, such as they have played at few other periods. A series of designing mistresses managed the Regent; the problem of his wife and his only daughter, with both of whom the Prince was on bad terms, had stirred up a hubbub of furious controversy, while the wrongs of the unfortunate Princess, which she herself never ceased loudly lamenting, were canvassed by the great ladies of the Opposition. For the Prince Regent had seceded to the Tories. It had been assumed, during the effective reign of George III, that, when his son finally inherited his functions, he would make haste to put the friends of his youth in power. The Prince had been a supporter of the Whig party; unfortunately, it soon transpired that his political views were a matter less of principle than of perversity and had been adopted with the sole intention of annoying the King. George III had been declared incompetent in 1811; but the reigning prince showed no sign of changing his ministers.

It was a period of agitation and deep unrest. From faraway grimy industrial towns was wafted the mutter of hungry and anxious workmen, who saw starvation following the new machines. In London, Whigs plotted against the Government. 'Prinny,' as his adversaries called their liege lord, entertained splendidly at Carlton House, and engaged in the usual bickering with his wife and brothers. His debts, already once liquidated, were thought not to exceed a hundred-thousand; while the conduct of the other members of the Royal Family, particularly the Duke of Cumberland and the Duke of York, was so deplorable that even loyalists confessed to a qualm. And then, the Waltz had made its appearance in English ballrooms. This giddy and lascivious modern measure seemed to epitomise the spirit of the time, although in certain houses it was still not allowed. It had been excluded, for example, from Devonshire House; Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire was now dead and her great friend, Lady Elizabeth Foster, ruled as second Duchess in her place. There was waltzing, however, among the Melbournes; and it

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was here that Byron came in the spring of 1812. Poised rather gloomily at the edge of the crowd—the whirling dancers reminded him of his own lameness—he courted but appeared to shun public attention.

Caroline Lamb, was the star of Melbourne House. Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire had been her aunt, and after a wandering and neglected childhood, diversified by violent fits of rage which caused her mother, Lady Bessborough, to doubt her sanity, she had married the second son of Lady Melbourne—in later life, Queen Victoria's favourite minister—the talented and good-humoured William Lamb. She was a romantic; he was cynical and easy-going. Not pretty according to the standards of that period which worshipped the voluptuous line of Canova, 'Caro' Lamb had a peculiar fascination that took shape in a variety of nicknames. She was Ariel, Young Savage, also Her Lavishship. Slender, with a musical drawling voice, huge dark but somewhat excessively protuberant eyes, she oscillated between moods of extreme sweetness—when she was gentle, she could be very winning indeed—and tantrums that seemed to cross the borders of lunacy. Above all, she was hasty and capricious. Having read *Childe Harold*, she insisted that she must meet the author, but, having encountered him, abruptly turned her back. That evening, the notorious string of epithets—*mad, bad and dangerous to know*—were jotted down in the pages of her diary.

Byron was piqued by her behaviour. 'This offer was made to you the other day,' he observed, when he was finally presented at Lady Holland's. 'May I ask why you declined it?' Soon he was calling regularly at Melbourne House. Once he brought a rose and a carnation. 'Your Ladyship, I am told, likes all that is new and rare—for a moment.' She replied on letter-paper embossed with scallop-shells, in a style both provocative and literary; and it was not long before an affair with Lady Caroline, the talked-of, the fashionable, the brilliant, added a crowning touch to Byron's success. Now he was a lion and a dandy. The young man who, but a few short months ago, had dined alone off vegetables at a dull club, had the choice of as many parties as he liked to attend and, wherever he elected to appear, was a centre of interest.

'About this period,' Byron remarked to Medwin, 'I became *un homme à bonnes fortunes*. . . . At the same period, a biographer is apt to find that the task of cataloguing Byron's loves, and ascribing to each of them her special attributes, begins to submerge the consideration of Byron himself. Yet his love affairs are a part of the Byronic legend. It remains to see how closely the romantic roué, who

*Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art,
And spread its snares licentious far and wide;
Nor from the base pursuit had turned aside,
As long as aught was worthy to pursue,*

bears any relation to the real man. In fact, Byron was generally the pursued. Lady Caroline may not have been conscious of laying her snares; but, once entangled, it was Byron who tried to flee and his mistress who determinedly increased the entanglement.

Byron's own account of the drama is revelatory, though perhaps a trifle disingenuous. 'The lady,' he told Medwin in a burst of confidence, 'had scarcely any personal attractions. Her figure, though genteel, was too thin to be good, and wanted that roundness which elegance would vainly supply. She was, however, young, and of the first connexions. *Au reste*, she possessed an infinite vivacity of mind, and an imagination heated by novel-reading. . . . I was soon congratulated by my friends on the conquest I had made, and did my utmost to show that I was not insensible to the partiality I could not but perceive. I made every effort to be in love, expressed as much ardour as I could muster, and kept feeding the flame with a constant supply of *billets-doux* and amatory verses. . . . I submitted long to the thralldom, for I hate "scenes" and am habitually indolent, but I was forced to snap the knot rather rudely at last. . . .' Byron spoke after a lapse of nine years; the passage has not only an historical value as embodying Byron's version of the episode, in which he felt that it was *he* who had been the victim, but also throws a curious and unpleasant sidelight on certain traits inseparable from the Byronic character. In modern jargon, he was an inveterate 'sexual snob'; the magnificence of Lady Caroline's 'connexions,' the plaudits of his fellow-men of the world, more than counterbalanced the fact that he did not desire her. It was not until she made him look ridiculous—she would persist in 'playing to the gallery'; her passion for him was extravagant and undisguised—that he grew weary of his unmanageable conquest.

It had all happened in that same astonishing summer. 'Language can hardly exaggerate,' says a contemporary, 'the folly that prevailed' in 1812, when waltzing and Lord Byron came into fashion. Its atmosphere went straight to feminine heads; women thronged round Byron to be presented to him, or turned faint and almost swooned at his casual glance, while anonymous but impassioned correspondents wrote to solicit a meeting or a curl of his hair. His reputation for wickedness was a great charm; actually, Byron's vices

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at this period were those of any other Regency gentleman who cultivated the *bonnes fortunes* that came his way. He was a philanderer, rather than a determined or brutal amorist. 'I would not give the tithe of a Birmingham farthing for any woman who could or would be purchased, nor indeed for any *woman quoad mere woman*; that is to say, unless I loved her for something more than her sex.' He had little respect for woman as a social being, but their company had a kind of sentimental attraction, which helped to lighten his spirits and calm his nerves. 'There is something to me very softening in the presence of a woman—some strange influence, even if one is not in love with them—which I cannot at all account for, having no very high opinion of the sex. But yet—I always feel in better humour with myself and everything else, if there is a woman within ken. Even Mrs. Mule, my firelighter—the most ancient and withered of her kind, and (except to myself) not the best tempered—always makes me laugh. . . .' We shall see, at a critical stage of the narrative, how the faculty of making Byron laugh, of putting him on easy terms with his own demon, could develop into the most enduring of passionate bonds; his love affairs, when they did not minister to the poet's vanity were sentimental or humdrum and domestic.

Lady Caroline very soon became a burden. He was ashamed to love her, she once remarked with cruel insight, because she was not a famous beauty. She also lacked the rudiments of common sense; her heart, which Byron had described as 'a little volcano' pouring its lava through her veins, erupted more and more violently as the summer went on, with less and less regard for public appearances. After a struggle, she was persuaded to leave England; but from Ireland, where she was rusticated with Lady Bessborough, her letters continued to arrive in a sulphureous stream, threatening, cajoling, importuning. Byron sought the advice of her mother-in-law; Lady Melbourne was an experienced and intelligent woman, who belonged by tradition and training to the eighteenth century, and had inherited its canons of social *bienséance*. Worldly, affectionate and shrewd, she liked Byron as much as she disliked his mistress, for the long-suffering William Lamb was her favourite son. A friendship grew up between the conspirators, this woman of more than sixty and the youthful poet, which had some of the charm and none of the inconveniences of sexual love.

Writing to her, as he did constantly for the next two years, Byron, the man of the world, was much in his element. The romantic side of his nature was carefully excluded. Through their witty and affectionate correspondence runs a note of Machiavellian intrigue,

suggestive of, if not imitated from, Choderlos de Laclos' famous novel *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. Lady Melbourne took the part of Madame de Merteuil; it is understandable that the cynicism of the *grande dame*, who had loved liberally, but always wisely, in her day, and had weathered the tempests of passion with flying colours, should fascinate this somewhat inexperienced worldling, brought up in a very different social sphere. It may be that he was even a trifle shocked. He responded with equal levity and humour, with a certain parade, too, of his own lack of moral scruple. The Byronic *fanfaronnade des vices*—Byron's tendency to act the part of the brilliant immoralist—is nowhere more plainly illustrated than in these letters.

The Lady Caroline affair was discussed at length. Byron sent Lady Melbourne her frantic scribbblings, described how he had answered them and her reply, or announced that she had threatened to return to England. Incidentally, he was preoccupied with a new love. The tempestuous and tormented spring of Caroline Lamb, its meagre blossom rudely swept by gales of hysteria, had been exchanged for Lady Oxford's autumnal beauty, on which the sun was magnificently going down. He spoke of her afterwards with deep gratitude. She resembled, he said, 'a landscape by Claude Lorraine . . . her beauties enhanced by the knowledge that they were shedding their dying beams.' His new mistress had been married when her lover was six; 'a woman,' he told Lady Blessington, 'is only grateful for her *first* and *last* conquest. The first of poor dear Lady Oxford's was achieved before I entered on this world of care; but the *last*, I do flatter myself, was reserved for me, and a *bonne-bouche* it was. . . . They spent the winter 'like the gods in Lucretius.' Outside the magic circle of their intimacy—it was Lady Oxford, herself a classical scholar, who had compared their life to that of gazing immortals—the disconsolate Lady Caroline fretted and stormed, exploding from time to time in a salvo of letters. Byron, as he remarked at a later period, had very little spite in his composition, but could be cruel if his patience was over-taxed. There is no doubt he behaved cruelly to Lady Caroline; at the instigation—perhaps at the dictation—of Lady Oxford, he wrote a letter which was sent to Ireland under her seal. Observing that he was now 'attached to another whose name it would be dishonourable to mention'—the monogram stamped on the sealing-wax was less evasive—he begged that she would trouble him no more.

All he asked was to be alone with his new happiness. During October and the earlier part of November, he was living at Eywood, the Oxfords' house, to which he returned in January 1813. February was spent not far away. It was just such a relationship as suited Byron,

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who had a liking for the quasi-domestic in affairs of love and for any arrangement that excluded emotional strain. Lady Oxford's children were 'perfect angels'; nicknamed 'The Harleian Miscellany,' since their paternal origins were doubtful and extremely various, they bore but scant resemblance to their putative father and had inherited some of their mother's abundant charm. Lady Charlotte Harley was Byron's especial favourite; thirteen years old and already beautiful, she was the Ianthe celebrated in *Childe Harold* I:

*Love's image upon earth without his wing,
And guileless beyond Hope's imagining!*

Few faces—except the face of Mary Chaworth and the wraith-like memory of a little cousin, Margaret Parker, 'one of the most beautiful of evanescent beings'—had made an impression on him so lasting and so clear.

When the spring came, he thought of accompanying his friends to Sicily. Meanwhile, he was very much in debt and had decided, though reluctantly, to sell Newstead. Money must be raised at all costs; would-be purchasers appeared and disappeared, but the Newstead estate remained unsold. There was nothing for it, he supposed, but to leave England. At this juncture, the narrative of Byron's life, as it approached a new and momentous crisis—the most momentous, perhaps, of his whole career; certainly the most disastrous in its effects—seems to assume the characteristics of classical drama. Tragedy has been defined as a fall from greatness; retribution lies in wait for the human being who raises himself above the level of his fellow-men and learns to exist on a more grandiloquent emotional plane. A single mis-step and he falls headlong; having committed some act of thoughtless arrogance, he is caught up in the ponderous mechanism of fate. *Hubris* leads inevitably to *atē*; a false gesture may be the preface to complete ruin.

Psychologically, the doctrine is comprehensible. An incautious, because exalted, frame of mind leaves the hero exposed to the attacks of circumstance, personified in his own hereditary faults and weaknesses. It tempts the ancestral furies to quit their lair. Byron, as I have tried to show at an earlier stage, was much obsessed by thoughts of his strange descent and of the passions and violence that ran in his family. He was proud of his inheritance, and yet it alarmed him. The belief that he was somehow a marked man, like Oedipus and similar heroes of legend—youths of royal blood brought up in obscurity—

¹ Introduction to Canto I; first published in the seventh edition, February 1814; written during the autumn of 1812.

grew stronger as his fortune became more dazzling. The very subservience of fortune seemed a kind of threat; 'it is odd,' he noted in 1813, 'I never set myself seriously to wishing without attaining it—and repenting.' By this time, the act of *hubris* had been committed and the effects of *atē*, or infatuation, had begun to be felt.

5

We must look back towards the autumn of 1812. During the summer months when the Byron fever was at its highest and his affair with Lady Caroline at its most perplexing, he had encountered the serious and thoughtful gaze of a young woman who was said to be a great heiress. She was the only child of Lady Melbourne's brother; educated by adored and doting parents, far away from the distractions of London life, she had the solemnity that often distinguishes only children, coupled with very decided views of her own. Indeed, she was something of an intellectual; versed in modern languages and mathematics, she attended lectures, read industriously and composed poems. She was devout, too, though quick-witted and not unworldly, and had a modest but firm belief in her personal judgment.

She was anxious to do her duty in every circumstance. Gifted with sound principles and a clear head, which had been improved on by a placid and happy upbringing, she was convinced that her own unaided determination—never to betray her better self—was fully adequate to the troubles and miseries that beset mankind. It was advisable to think carefully before acting. Lord Byron was the rage when she came to London; and among the satellites who thronged around him in a giddy circle, she had noticed the most impassioned of feminine votaries, her eccentric cousin by marriage, Caroline Lamb. That alone was enough to determine her conduct; other women might cheapen their precious womanhood by paying homage to the gloomy and sinister poet—he was reputed to be very wicked and extremely proud—but Annabella Milbanke would keep her distance. She, at any rate, would retain her wits in this feminine bedlam and pass by, unruffled and unconcerned.

Her attitude roused Byron's curiosity. If there was one thing that never ceased to wake his interest, it was a failure to succumb before his charm, or a blank refusal to put it to the proof. Thus Caroline had refused an introduction; Miss Milbanke did not positively decline to meet him, but, when they met, gravely confronted him

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on equal terms, and showed a tendency to act the sermonist, not the worshipper. Lord Byron was great, but was he good? No doubt, he had consummate poetic genius; but was he sure that his genius made him happy, or that genius, divorced from virtue, was of much avail? No, she decided, he was not happy. . . . These tactics, which had been adopted by Miss Milbanke with all the guileless good faith of her virginal nature, gradually became a potent means of attraction.¹ Byron proposed marriage through Lady Melbourne, but was rejected, in the October of 1812.

He was not in love, but his imagination had been touched. Besides, he wanted to settle down, and Annabella seemed so different from other women who preyed on his nerves and wasted his leisure. She herself was fascinated, but a little alarmed. At bottom, she thought, he was morally good; but dissipation and his own satanic pride, for the moment, had gained a decisive advantage. Perhaps it was her mission to reverse the balance; some ten months after her first refusal—she had seen Byron during the course of the following spring and he had turned deathly pale as he pressed her hand—she wrote him an exceedingly prolix letter.

Byron still contemplated marriage. 'Sin's long labyrinth' was proving tedious and he yearned for the haven of domesticity. But another sin was to be added to the catalogue; it did not emanate, as so many of his 'sins' had done, from idleness, vanity or youthful spirits, but was rooted in the deepest part of his nature. Its commission involved a member of his family. Mrs. Byron's death two years before had left Augusta Byron, his half-sister—Captain Byron's daughter by Lady Carmarthen—nearer to him than any other human being. He had been fond of Augusta as a boy—she alone could put him at his ease and help him to forget that he was lame—but, though they had corresponded, they lived necessarily much apart. Augusta was now married to her cousin; George Leigh, who spent most of his time at race-meetings, or gambling and drinking with richer friends, was very seldom to be found at the conjugal fireside, while Augusta, always embarrassed but usually buoyant, surrounded by a mob of growing children, kept house at Six Mile Bottom, near Newmarket. She bore her husband no malice and life no grudge. Hers was an easy-going temperament that took men and circumstances just as she found them and made the best of a decidedly imperfect world. Captain Leigh might be a spendthrift—but why repine? One existed as one could from day to day—materially and

¹ And then, of course, the fact that Miss Milbanke had great expectations weighed heavily with Byron.

emotionally from hand to mouth—and wept or smiled according to the state of the barometer. True, she had a repertory of pious phrases and gave away Bibles when she was in the mood; and yet, at heart, there had never been such a pagan. As she said herself, of what consequence was one's behaviour, provided that it made nobody else unhappy?

Augusta's prescience was unfortunately somewhat limited. She refrained from looking very far ahead and let the gratification of the moment suffice to itself. But it is difficult and invidious to apportion blame. Augusta was amoral in spite of her upbringing, Byron—if moral terms are to be employed—immoral, haunted by a sense of doom and not unacquainted with a sense of guilt. Augusta was passive and subservient. . . . There had been a coldness between the poet and his sister; but when, in the summer of 1813, financial misery at Six Mile Bottom became intolerable, it was agreed that she should take refuge near him in London until the situation had had time to settle down. As always, her company proved delightful; Byron had been nervous and on edge, his triumph threatening to turn sour, Lady Caroline still explosive in the background—she had created a dreadful scene at Lady Heathcote's, pretended to stab herself and cut her hand on a broken glass—the Newstead estate still unsold. Now here was Augusta to make him laugh. Lady Oxford had a suave and maternal charm, and Augusta, although only twenty-nine—Byron himself was twenty-five—had something of the same reassuring quality. He admitted that dear 'Goose' was a fool; but then, her invariable muddle-headedness, her odd methods of thinking and behaving, warmed his heart as mere brilliance could never have done. Was she not his own flesh and blood? She, too, was a descendant of the Byrons, that inbred, unhappy, violent race. All the mysterious forces of consanguinity, which elsewhere might have produced an instinctive aversion, were exerted to weave a passionate and lasting bond.

It was Byron who precipitated the act of *hubris*. 'Really and truly,' he declared at a later period, 'as I hope mercy and happiness for her—by that God who made me for my own misery, and not much for the good of others—*she* was not to blame, one thousandth part in comparison. She was not aware of her own peril till it was too late, and I can only account for her subsequent *abandon* by an observation which I think is not unjust, that women are much more *attached* than men if they are treated with anything like fairness or tenderness.' Simplicity, rather than perversity, was Augusta's downfall; while, on Byron's side, it was less moral braggadocio—though sheer perversity

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may have induced him to begin the intrigue—than deep and genuine gratitude that clinched their union. Of its origin in his temperament, what can one say? Even commonplace passions are hard to analyse; and in this passion there were many and conflicting strains, derived from contrasted strains in Byron's character. It expressed him at his most callous and his most affectionate. Suppose that he made the attempt in a mood of bravado, his attitude was soon the reverse of cool and calculating. Never had his passion been more sincere, or its development more unencumbered by motives of vanity.

At last, he had found a woman who understood him. 'I have never ceased nor can cease to feel,' he wrote from Venice in 1819, 'that perfect and boundless attachment which bound and binds me to you—which renders me utterly incapable of *real* love for any other human being—for what could they be to me after *you*?' Here, then, was the long-expected Byronic doom. That it was a Byron who shared his fate as partner and victim seemed yet a further proof of its inevitability, a confirmation of the curse he had always suspected. Perhaps this is to over-dramatise his frame of mind; he seems to have alternated, during the earlier stages of the relationship, between a jaunty but somewhat apologetic cynicism—amusing to be able to shock 'dear Lady M.'; there were some things even his confidante drew the line at—and a half-defiant foreboding of future tragedy.

The summer drew on and London emptied. Byron was still at his rooms in Bennet Street; Augusta was still living in her brother's shadow. Originally, he had thought of joining the Oxfords in Sicily, and for this intention he now substituted a wild scheme of crossing the Channel and travelling south with Mrs. Leigh. Lady Melbourne, however, vetoed the project. Byron had taken her into his confidence, and she warned him that he was on the brink of an abyss and that to go abroad would be irremediable folly. It was a crime, she pointed out, quite forgetting her customary *sang-froid*, 'for which there was no salvation in this world, whatever there might be in the next.'

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Byron's confidante was not backward in suggesting an appropriate remedy. What Byron needed was a new sentimental interest. And the letters she received that autumn were agreeably reassuring. He was in the country with his old friend Wedderburn Webster. His first impressions of his hostess, Lady Frances—she was twenty-six and had been married nine years—were appreciative but cool and

unconcerned. He noted that she was 'young, and religious, and pretty.' Ethereal-looking, fair-haired, with long dark eye-lashes, she seemed the very 'Soul of melancholy gentleness' and was plainly susceptible to Byron's charm. He had started the adventure in a spirit of intrigue. . . . But readers who wish to pursue the story must turn to Byron's own accomplished narrative in the letters with which he diverted Lady Melbourne. Never had his confidences been more amusing; the deceived husband added a final touch of farce by making Byron the aide-de-camp of his infidelities and perpetually boasting that Lady Frances was irreproachable. So much for the cynical man of the world; but Byron's letters reveal the sentimentalist as well as the roué. On a sudden and unexpected wave of compunction, he refused to press the advantage once it was gained.

He returned to London and to memories of Augusta. Byron's fluctuations of despair and hopefulness are reflected, during the next few months of his life, by the journal in which he jotted down his thoughts. Its opening phrases set the tone of the whole document: 'If this had been begun ten years ago, and faithfully kept!!!—heigho! there are too many things I wish never to have remembered, as it is. Well—I have had my share of what are called the pleasures of this life, and have seen more of the European and Asiatic world than I have made a good use of. . . . At five-and-twenty, when the better part of life is over, one should be *something*;—and what am I? nothing but five-and-twenty—and the odd months. What have I seen? the same man all over the world—ay, and woman too. Give me a Mussulman who never asks questions, and a she of the same race who saves one the trouble of putting them.' He is bored and listless; but through the warp of cynical ennui runs a web of tormenting recollections which he can neither quite disguise nor dares to acknowledge: 'Last night I finished *Zuleika*, my second Turkish Tale.¹ I believe the composition of it kept me alive—for it was written to drive my thoughts from the recollection of

Dear sacred name, rest ever unrevealed.

At least, even here, my hand would tremble to write it.' *Zuleika* was renamed *The Bride of Abydos*. A beautiful and impassioned hero and heroine, who believe themselves—though erroneously—to be brother and sister, meet, love and come at last to a tragic end. It was published in November 1813. Discretion had never been Byron's forte; Lady Melbourne was not the only acquaintance to receive hints,

¹ 'All convulsions end with me in rhyme.'—Letter to Moore, November 30th, 1813.

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more or less explicit, on the subject of Augusta and his love, and half-confidences as to the paternity of her unborn child. Already, in the summer of that fatal year, he had mentioned 'a far more serious . . . scrape than any of the last twelve months—and that is saying a good deal.' His letters to Tom Moore develop the theme; he writes of 'a strange summer adventure, which I don't like to think of . . .' and promises one day to tell him the story; while, at the same time, the pages of his journal abound in mysterious allusions and cryptic notes.

A frenzy of indiscretion drove him forward. The wits and politicians at Holland House were somewhat startled to hear him speak of incestuous love in a vein of mingled irrelevance and deep feeling. For women he reserved his broadest hints; he had a mistress, he is said to have told one of them, whom he loved passionately; she was with child by him and, if it was a girl, it should be called 'Medora.' . . . Augusta's child, duly christened Medora Leigh¹ and accepted by her husband as his own, was not born until the April of the following year; but, in the meantime, Byron's confidences had done their work. Various reasons may be suggested for his behaviour. In the largest, as in the smallest, affairs of life, Byron was incapable of holding his tongue, and, if he wished to talk, could seldom resist the fantasy. Then, no doubt, there were the specific effects of wretchedness; it is plain that, until he finally left England, the conflict he had undergone disturbed his entire mental equipoise. Lastly, he showed a streak of exhibitionism; in Byron's drama, as in that of Oscar Wilde, we have the spectacle of a brilliant and intelligent man who is possessed by a kind of self-destructive arrogance. Both writers seem to have extracted an hysterical pleasure from the insensate boldness with which they courted the approach of tragedy.

The scandal flourished during 1813 and 1814. As an example of how widely the rumour had spread, we are told that Mrs. Leigh's nephew at Eton was questioned by school friends about his aunt and enlightened as to the significance of *The Bride of Abydos*. Byron's wellwishers were naturally much alarmed; his women friends were anxious to see him married, none more so than Lady Melbourne and Augusta, poor 'Goose' being particularly urgent. Byron was not averse from the plan; he conned over the list of possible heiresses, submitted by his two feminine counsellors, and was pleased to express an interest in one or another. With Miss Milbanke, at her

¹ For an account of Medora Leigh's career—eminently Byronic in its own way—see *Life & Letters of Lady Byron*, by Ethel Colburn Mayne. Medora's paternity, however, must always remain doubtful, just as the allegations against Byron and Augusta cannot be proved beyond a shadow of doubt.

father's house in the North of England, he still maintained a platonic correspondence which she herself had initiated a year before. Her prim letters annoyed and yet amused him. 'Yesterday,' he noted in 1813, 'a very pretty letter from Annabella, which I answered. What an odd situation and friendship is ours!—without one spark of love on either side, and produced by circumstances which in general lead to coldness on one side, and aversion on the other. She is a very superior woman, and very little spoiled, which is strange in an heiress—a girl of twenty—a peeress that is to be, in her own right—an only child, and a *savante*, who has always had her own way. She is a poetess—a mathematician—a metaphysician, and yet, withal, very kind, generous, and gentle, with very little pretension. Any other head would be turned with half her acquisitions, and a tenth of her advantages.' He could not help admiring the strange girl. 'My heart,' he announced at another time, 'always alights on the nearest perch,' and Annabella offered a solid and permanent foothold, a haven that it was not to be expected he would refuse for long.

Yet he held off till the September of 1814. During the interval, much had occurred in Byron's life; *The Corsair*, published at the beginning of February, had enjoyed an immense popular success, though undoubtedly it is one of his feeblest poems. He had also been exposed to savage criticism; a short poem, issued in the same volume, indirectly attacking the Prince Regent, had drawn down on him the wrath of the Tory newspapers, by whom even his lameness was not spared. He had visited Newmarket and recorded the birth of Medora Leigh. '... It is *not* an "Ape,"' he informed Lady Melbourne, referring to the mediæval superstition that the children of incest are born monsters, 'and if it is, that must be my fault; however, I will positively reform. You must however allow that it is utterly impossible I can ever be half so well liked elsewhere, and I have been all my life trying to make someone love me, and never got the sort that I preferred before. But positively she and I will grow good and all that, and so we are *now* and shall be these three weeks and more too.'

The domesticity he preferred being out of the question, or, if he enjoyed it, hedged about with appalling dangers, it was natural he should begin to think of a different kind. Marriage, he believed, might bring him happiness; his long course of dalliance with Annabella, that 'superior,' inaccessible, charming girl, culminated in a second proposal of marriage which, unlike the first, was—almost greedily—accepted. On her part, it was a passion of the brain and nerves; Annabella's nobly intentioned, exacting spirit had always longed to be put to some supreme proof, such as marriage with the

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baleful poet would surely provide. It was a thrilling, highly stimulating, momentous duty. . . . Byron's own view of his projected marriage was less romantic; when he came to stay at her father's house during the autumn—and it was some while before he could make up his mind to go—his behaviour was neither attentive nor conciliatory, and, as he confessed to Lady Melbourne, he had 'grave doubts.' A more commonplace young woman might have been daunted; his moodiness merely strengthened Miss Milbanke's resolve.

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They were married at Seaham, on January 2nd, 1815. Byron had loitered North for the wedding, pausing on the road to stay with Augusta. Hobhouse was to act as his best man; and never, observed the faithful friend, had lover been less in haste to greet his bride. Indeed, his whole conduct was most unloverlike; during the ceremony, from the hard cushion on which he was kneeling, Byron caught his eye with a half-smile, when some phrase in the service aroused his sardonic sense of humour. Lady Byron looked pale, determined and serious; it would be her own fault, she told her husband's friend as he handed her into the carriage which was to take them away, if she were not happy. Byron followed her, reluctant and ill at ease, and they set off together on the adventure of their honeymoon.

Byron nicknamed it 'the treacle-moon.' It was spent at Halnaby Hall in Yorkshire. Few honeymoons come up to expectation; but, in Annabella's, the treacly coating of conjugal love was, even from the earliest day and the earliest hours, insufficient to hide the brimstone that lay beneath. In the carriage, as they drove south through the falling snowflakes, Byron spoke to the young woman at his side—pale and serious, in a slate-grey satin pelisse—with a fury that she could not understand. In Durham, they were greeted by a peal of bells. 'Ringing for our happiness, I suppose,' he exclaimed in a tone of vindictive irony; and later, 'It *must* come to a separation! You should have married me when I first proposed.'

That was the burden of his rage: Annabella, by refusing his first proposal, had wrecked his entire life and wrecked her own, and would very soon discover that her task was hopeless. Something had happened in the meantime. We cannot doubt that his agony was sincere; but Byron would not have been the man we know, if he had neglected the opportunity of playing a part; and he made

the most of a very genuine desperation. For the melodrama that he staged at Halnaby Hall our authority is Lady Byron's private narrative, written after their marriage had come to grief. In later life she may have been guilty of exaggeration; but the various incidents that she describes are so Byronic, down to the smallest turn of language, that we have no reason to disbelieve in their authenticity. Take, for instance, her story of the wedding-night. There were crimson curtains round the bed in which they slept, and the firelight, as it shone through them, made a ruddy glow, rousing him to start up with sudden terror. 'Good God,' he cried, 'I am surely in Hell!' Next morning, he received a letter from Augusta; it stirred him, particularly the opening line—'Dearest, first and best of human beings'—which he pointed out and commented on for his wife's benefit, to 'a kind of fierce and exulting transport' of pride and passion. He had a habit of wandering the house alone; girt with his invariable dagger and pistol—all his life, he kept firearms within reach—he would pace up and down the silent gallery, hour after hour, before going to bed. Once he came to her in a state of nervous collapse; and, as she lay beside him, she tried to assuage his misery by resting her head against her husband's breast. 'You should have a softer pillow than my heart,' he murmured. 'I wonder which will break first,' she said, 'yours or mine?'—'the only words of despair he ever heard me utter.'

Occasionally, he would pity her aloud. Sometimes, too, his pity was self-directed and he would speak of himself, like a child, in the third person: 'B's a fool. . . . Yes, he is a fool. . . . Poor B.—*poor B.*' After three weeks at Halnaby, they returned to Seaham. Outwardly, the marriage was going well, and Byron, in letters to his friends, announced that life was as tolerable as could be expected. True, Annabella's parents he found very tiresome; Sir Ralph's stories over the dinner-table were a bore, and he hated the round of draughts and tea and gossip. At the beginning of March, however, they were ready to leave. Unfortunately, the next stage of their married odyssey was a visit to Augusta at Six Mile Bottom, where they stayed from the twelfth to the twenty-eighth. The visit was none of Augusta's choosing; she had reason to know the difficulties of her brother's temperament; and, if in the past she had been able to control and calm him, to make him laugh and help him to forget his demon, she soon learned that it was no longer within her power. The demon was rampant and unchained. Had not Augusta urged him to get married? Yet, now that he came to her for consolation—for the consolation that only she could give—she refused herself and took

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refuge in moral platitudes. Very well, she should suffer as he was suffering; Annabella, the 'spoiled child,' should suffer too. He himself, the most unhappy of them all, would exult in his own inferno of satanic pride.

An inferno Augusta's house became. 'Now I have *her*,' Byron remarked, when he joined his wife on the night of their arrival, 'you will find I can do without *you*—in all ways.' Augusta's obduracy made him more and more outrageous. Did she remember, he would ask, the winter they had spent together at Newstead, when they had been snowbound, and the signs by which they had communicated? Had Annabella noticed the brooch he wore, and the brooch he had given Augusta with the same hieroglyphs? 'Well, Guss, I am a reformed man, ain't I?' Both women submitted as best they could; Augusta, to whom he spoke with such brutality that Lady Byron could hardly bring herself to write the sentences, 'seemed fearful of every word he uttered and fearful of checking him.' He explained, according to Annabella, that Medora was his child; in the evenings, he would turn on Annabella with the suggestion that she should take herself off to bed—'We don't want *you*, my charmer'—and one night, when she had inadvertently brushed against him, he woke her with a furious cry of 'Don't touch me!'

Augusta's unfailing kindness was her sole support. Naturally warm-hearted and sympathetic, Mrs. Leigh was also astute enough to understand that in Annabella lay her only hope of safety, since no one else could keep the scandal at arm's-length. United, they must face Byron and the world. Annabella was glad to accept her friendship; she had resisted the dreadful truth as long as she could, and now sought comfort in the idea that the offence had been accidental and unrepeatable. Her moral fibre responded to the strain; 'it was hopeless to keep them apart—it was not hopeless, in my opinion, to keep them innocent. I felt myself the guardian of these two beings, *indeed* "on the brink of a precipice."' Yet there were moments when sheer hatred threatened to choke her, when she was tempted to plunge a dagger in Augusta's heart; and for such impulses she found a characteristic remedy. 'I was almost mad—and to prevent myself indulging the passion of revenge, I was obliged to substitute another—that of romantic forgiveness.' Having determined that this was her right course, she pursued it unwaveringly to the very end.

She pledged herself to save Augusta from damnation. Incidentally, she made what little use she could, even though it cost her many pangs, of Augusta's soothing influence on Byron's spirit. Thus, she was prepared that her rival should stay with them in London; and

not once, but several times during the course of the year, Augusta joined them at No. 13 Piccadilly Terrace, where they had taken an expensive unfurnished house. Her presence was sometimes maddening and sometimes mollifying; Byron would behave as he had behaved at Newmarket, torment both his sister and his wife with references to 'women of the theatre'—he was on the committee of management at Drury Lane—and shut himself away in frenzied gloom; or the storm clouds would dissolve and the sky lighten, till his rages seemed unaccountable and ridiculous memory.

Perhaps he was really a little mad? Augusta, in the first stages of their friendship—no doubt, as a measure of self-protection—appears to have hinted that Byron was deranged and must be humoured, if he was ever to regain his balance. There were frequent letters between Newmarket and Piccadilly; Byron's friends of the Drury Lane management—Douglas Kinnaird was the chief culprit—kept him up, talking and drinking, to all hours; and Kinnaird's brandy had a disastrous effect on his temper. Money was short and duns were troublesome. . . . From Lady Byron's account of her married life, and the letters which she wrote to Mrs. Leigh, we derive, as it is natural that we should, a picture of almost unrelieved depression. Yet the Byrons, like other households, had their fine days; the poet might be gloomy and embittered, scowl and rave, and talk of suicide or life abroad; but he was sometimes affectionate to the point of bestowing nicknames. Annabella is 'Pippin' in their correspondence, a name prompted by the roundness of her face; while Byron, in his turn, is entitled 'Duck.' So far as the outer world could see—Byron's intimates divined that he was not happy—the marriage had proved a qualified success.

Their child was born on December 10th, 1815. Byron, ill and harassed by his creditors, who had been persecuting him continuously for several months, celebrated the birth of his infant daughter—she was christened Augusta Ada Byron—with a loud and terrifying scene in the room below. During January, bailiffs entered the house; and, on the 15th, Annabella, at Byron's request, which he had tendered in a brief and chilly note, left Piccadilly Terrace to visit her mother. They were estranged, but no rupture had yet occurred. It was after her arrival at Kirkby Mallory that she wrote him an affectionate conjugal missive—signed 'Pippin . . . Pip . . . Ip,' and addressed, in the same style, to 'Dearest Duck'—which conveyed her parents' hope that he would soon join them. Then, on the 2nd of February, came a letter from Sir Ralph Milbanke; Lady Byron's parents, it announced, 'could not feel themselves justified in permit-

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ting her return,' and must ask him to agree to a separation. Byron, hurt, horrified and taken aback, would not believe that Annabella had been consulted.

He wrote pleadingly to Annabella, and so did Hobhouse. But when Annabella had made up her mind, she was hard to move. For she had discovered that Byron was not mad. On leaving London, she had arranged for a doctor to see him; and the medical report, which she received at Kirkby Mallory, stated that, although irascible and violent, her husband was indubitably sane. The effect of this pronouncement was far-reaching; subconsciously, she had always clung to the hope that Byron was not responsible for his behaviour, or suffered from a diseased imagination—somehow, she had never quite believed his stories. Suddenly, the last merciful vestige of doubt, the pathetic hope that she might one day be able to cure him, evaporated and she was left in a spiritual void.

With characteristic energy, she took her bearings. Reasonable as Byron was uncontrolled, morally sure of herself as Augusta was pliant and weak, it was Annabella who mastered the situation. But she triumphed at the cost of her own happiness. Just what specific act or admission she reported to her parents, and to the legal adviser whom they soon brought in, does not now much signify. Perhaps she left Byron because she could not change him; by deciding that her life was finished and done with, and that duty and not happiness must be her aim, she acquired an immense tactical advantage and a kind of moral ascendancy over the other two. Through Augusta, whom she dominated, she had a hold on Byron. This drama, rather than a conflict of letters and statements, seems to lend the separation its true interest. It was the triumph of an indomitable steely rectitude, gained at the expense of youth and hope, over the destiny of two passionate and fallible beings.

Well might Byron call her his 'moral Clytemnestra.' The superior, bookish 'Princess of Parallelograms,' whom he had envisaged as a sylph or fairy with a taste for sums, had turned into a veritable avenging spirit. He pleaded, but he continued to plead in vain. We are so accustomed to the oddities of our own temperament, tiresome and even noxious though they often may be, that we are inclined to discount their effect on other people. Thus, Byron was genuinely hurt by his wife's behaviour. Of course, he understood that he was ill to live with. But what had he done to merit such inflexible hardness? There was 'Goose'—but that was an old story. . . . Lawyers, parents, relatives were all aroused, all pressing for a definite separation, until at last he gave way and signed the deed. Annabella he had not

encountered since she left his house; nor was he ever destined to meet her again.

Meanwhile, the ancient rumour had raised its head. The scandal of 1813 and 1814, though it had enjoyed an extensive popularity, had never obtruded itself on the general view. But this scandal there was no condoning or suppressing; Byron's friends heroically did their best, and Lady Jersey gave a party during April to which Byron and Augusta were both invited. Her brave attempt to rehabilitate them was unsuccessful; Augusta, though her position was strong in London—she was attached to the Queen and had rooms in St. James's Palace—was cut by many of her acquaintances, while to her brother only one woman consented to speak, Miss Mercer Elphinstone, who said it was a pity he had not married her, for then nothing of the kind would have befallen. He had but to cross the threshold of an apartment, to see 'Countesses and ladies of fashion' leaving 'in crowds.'

It was a strange expiation for a professed misanthrope. Henceforth, wherever he went and whatever he did, his compatriots, equally curious and disapproving, attracted by the legend of his gloom and debauchery, would follow him with telescopes and opera-glasses, or crowd round him as round the cage of a wild beast. He was alone now, and he must bid good-bye to Augusta; she was, he told his wife in a farewell letter, 'almost the last being you have left me to part with.' They parted, we know with bitter tears. He sailed from Dover on April 25th, an exile in fact as in imagination.

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Soon the bustle of his departure had faded away. The great yapping Cerberus, Public Opinion, which he had thrown a sop in the form of some farewell verses¹—a rather maudlin apostrophe to Annabella—craned from its dismal cliff-edge and watched him go. His equipage dwindled through the Low Countries and along the Rhine; presently he was sighted by the Lake of Geneva, where he was consorting with that desperate atheist, young Mr. Shelley, who was his companion both in blasphemy and unlawful pleasure. It was said that the poets shared two sisters. Actually, the young women whom the story concerned were Mary Godwin and her step-sister, Claire Clairmont, the daughter of William Godwin's second wife. Mary loved Shelley

¹ *Fare Thee Well*, printed for private circulation, but published in *The Champion* on April 14th, described by Wordsworth as 'wretched doggerel, disgusting in sentiment, and in execution contemptible.'

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and Claire, Byron; although 'love' is perhaps hardly the right word for the obstinacy with which she had thrown herself at his famous head and the determination with which she had bullied him into seducing her. Byron, as usual, had submitted. All this had happened in London some months ago, and the unwilling lover may have assumed that his task was finished. He enjoyed Shelley's company and conversation; he did not welcome Miss Clairmont's assiduities.

Shelley was much interested in the great writer. Privately, he might describe him as 'mad as the winds' and 'a slave to the vilest and most vulgar prejudices,' infected with 'the canker of aristocracy'; but his admiration for the poet's genius never wavered. On Byron, his effect was revivifying; both were poets, both were exiles from their native land, and then Shelley—a point that Byron always appreciated—was 'as perfect a gentleman as ever crossed a drawing-room' and had an instinctive *savoir-faire* that fitted the part. He was also, Byron declared after his death, 'the best and least selfish man I ever knew. I never knew one that was not a beast in comparison.' It is typical of contemporary gossip at any period, that Byron's association with this eccentric archangel should have been held up as the final proof of his degeneracy and that their friendship should have been dubbed 'a league of incest.' Despite Claire, whose attentions he had not solicited—'Now don't scold,' he wrote to Augusta; 'but what could I do?'—under Shelley's influence, he lived a calm and rational life.

Together, they boated and discussed literature. Once they were nearly drowned in a sudden squall, and Shelley's fortitude impressed and delighted his friend, who was proud of his own exemplary physical courage. Shelley left for England at the end of August; and among the manuscripts that he took home on Byron's behalf were the third canto of *Childe Harold*, part of *Manfred*, *The Prisoner of Chillon* and other poems. Of these, *Childe Harold* is the most important. The fourth canto was not published till 1818; but, since it completes, though in a less ecstatic strain, the rhapsodies and lamentations of the third, the two parts may be conveniently treated as one. Their hero seems to have entered a new avatar; the Byron who left England in 1809 was a young man with a burden of vague griefs that, if real, were predominantly subjective. In 1816, his sorrows were real enough; the banishment that had fallen on him after his marriage was no longer an exile he had himself decreed, but a painful and ignominious social fact. He had been wounded in the most sensitive core of his being—alike in his love and in his self-love—and had a lasting and bitter subject for remorse.

The result was a torrent of unbridled versifying. Poetry, he once

asserted, was 'the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake'; it was not 'emotion recollected in tranquillity,' so much as passion rehearsed during its aftermath. He could not write, he informed a correspondent, when his passions were actively engaged; for poetry was 'the dream of my sleeping passions,' and 'only in their Somnambulism' could he give them utterance. We see now why his life on the lake-shore was so productive; the events of the last few years and the last few months rose before him, as dreams arise in the sleeper's fantasy, and, to be quieted, must be given expression in verse. Splendid was the expression Byron gave. Rhetorical, declamatory, sometimes turgid, *Childe Harold* rushes on from stanza to stanza, never flagging and seldom pausing to take breath. It seems to have been indited in a kind of delirium; 'I was half mad during the time of its composition, between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love unextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies. I should, many a good day, have blown my brains out, but for the recollection that it would have given pleasure to my mother-in-law. . . .' Again, the poem is a panorama of scenes visited; but, whereas the landscape of the first two cantos is apt to suggest the 'views' cast by a magic lantern—or the slides in an old-fashioned stereoscope—the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* are penetrated, through and through, by the writer's emotion:

*I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture . . .*

It is provoked by the desolation of a famous battlefield; his sonorous and grandiloquent 'set pieces'—*The Eve of Waterloo*, *The Gladiator's Death*, *The Tomb of Cecilia Metella*—become, in his handling of them, almost personal and hark back to memories of his own life. Beside the Appian Way, he could not but think of Lady Byron:

*But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's, or more—a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honoured—and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?*

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*Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs?—for such the affectionate are.*

Though unobtrusively and, it may be, quite unconsciously, memories of his wife and daughter must still creep in.

It was at this period that Byron first emerged as one of the greatest of nineteenth-century poets. Much of his early verse has ceased to hold the attention of the modern reader. True, *English Bards*, which has something of Pope's vivacity, though very little of that abounding lyric charm with which Pope gave beauty and lightness to his meanest missiles, still bears re-reading from start to finish. Not so his popular Eastern romances; *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, *The Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*, all composed during his residence in England, seem nowadays as trumpery and meretricious as extremely bad pictures of the school of Delacroix. The poetic dramas, written while he was abroad, on which he expended his time and energy when he might have been finishing *Don Juan*, have gone the way of most poetic dramas and were not well received, as it happens, by contemporary critics. The third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold*, however, appear to justify his proud prediction:

*But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire. . . .*

Although these cantos include many splendid individual lines, their effectiveness, like the effectiveness of a good speech, comes from the broad movement of the whole production. Byron's method is often that of the orator. To examine closely any of his more famous passages is to recollect his first speech in the House of Lords and his ambition—long abandoned—of swaying the country. Take a well-known passage from the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*. Not only are the ebb and flow of his phrases, the gradual working-up of the reader's emotion, startlingly in accordance with the rules of rhetoric;

but a regular arrangement of short breathing-spaces, each marked by a parenthesis or comma, is provided as though to facilitate its public delivery:

*He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday.*

Add a constant pressure of strong emotion. Byron was not one of those deliberate artists, by whom emotion is rarefied or slowly distilled, but usually wrote at the command of an immediate impulse, before the effervescence of his feelings had died away:

*Yet must I think less wildly:—I have thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame. . . .*

On his contemporaries the impression was indelible. It has been said by a French critic of the *Childe*, that he is but 'René habillé en Shakespeare'—Chateaubriand's hero dressed up for an English audience. René and Harold have certainly something in common; the French narrative, which was published in 1802, shows us a young man of noble family, driven from hearth and home by a mysterious sorrow. Through the plot runs the theme of incest; René's sister had conceived a fatal passion for him and chosen to immure herself in the depths of a lonely convent. But that is the extent of the resemblance. Byron may have been indebted to Chateaubriand; but both writers treated subjects that were 'in the air'—the troublesome legacy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—while Harold, with his manifold absurdities, is far less insipid personage than his somewhat mawkish predecessor.

It was thanks to his own experiences and his own genius that Byron became the representative of romantic youth. In France since the restoration of the Bourbons, and in England under the government of a Tory oligarchy, many a young Liberal, approaching manhood, felt that he was deeply at variance with the established social scheme. From a sense of failure, he took refuge in introspection. Classicism is usually synonymous with political conservatism and consists—to state its aims as roughly as possible—of an attempt to impose an artificial unity on the discordant raw materials of human

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existence. Romanticism, which also attacked the political foundations of power and privilege, taught the emotions to set store by their autonomy and demand that they should be liberated from the shackles of Reason. Often the result was calamitous; and an extreme example of the romantic revolutionary is illustrated in the character of Byron's hero, a type of the individual, hopelessly divided against himself, in whose being all the passions are enfranchised. The condition of emotional and moral anarchy that had veiled Childe Harold's brow with gloom was emulated by a host of foreign successors, notably the French Romantic Poets who flourished in the thirties and forties.

In Byron, Romanticism had found its showman. Oddly enough, though a Romantic by personal temperament, by literary conviction he belonged to the other school, for the author of *The Dunciad* was the poet whom he most admired. It was a source of regret to him that he had not modelled his work on Pope. But then, in his literary as in his personal life, Byron was essentially a creature of instinct, controlled by instinct more often than by judgment. He understood himself but dimly, Goethe said, living from hour to hour and passion to passion; yet his like would never come again. 'He had a high degree of that daemonic instinct and attraction which influences others independently of reason, effort or affection, which sometimes succeeds in guiding where the understanding fails.' It was this attraction his contemporaries could not escape. Byron magnetised those who knew him; and even those who knew him very slightly confessed to the strange power he had learned to exert. He was 'dangerous to look at,' whispered a terrified English lady, who met him with her daughters in a church at Rome; they must on no account trust themselves to meet his gaze. A 'sort of *under* look' he used to give frightened Lady Rosebery to the verge of collapse; while an elderly blue-stockings once fainted as he entered the room. 'The prevailing expression,' observed Southey of his face, 'was something which distrusted you, and which it could never have been possible for you or me to trust.' For his enemies, some mysterious mark of Cain seemed to have left its satanic stigma on that splendid forehead.

Yet, in solitude, he lived a quiet, prosaic life. Quiet and orderly had been the course of his life in Switzerland; Hobhouse joined him during the autumn, and they made a short tour through the Bernese Alps. Byron's mood was still lyrical and exalted; they viewed a glacier, which reminded the poet of a 'frozen hurricane,' and 'heard Shepherds' pipes and avalanches, and looked on the clouds foaming

up from the valleys below us, like the spray of the ocean of hell.' For Augusta's benefit, he made a journal of their adventures. 'To you, dearest Augusta, and for you I have kept this record of what I have seen and felt. Love me as you are beloved by me.' The memory of all that he had lost continued to haunt him. There was a faint hope—it grew progressively fainter and fainter—that Mrs. Leigh might dare the censure of the world at large, and throw in her lot with that of the exile. But Lady Byron maintained a moral ascendancy; it was Annabella's high-minded and consistent purpose, not only that Augusta should remain in England—and, with this object, she gave Augusta her social support—but that, if Byron returned, as he sometimes threatened to do, the erring woman should refuse to see her brother.

She supervised the correspondence that passed between them. Augusta must be careful that her letters did not encourage 'his criminal *desires*, I think I may add *designs*.' But Annabella's method was far from crude; 'anxious as I feel to support and comfort you in the recovered path of virtue, I could not hope to do so by an attempt to impose my own opinions. On the contrary I would, as far as possible, remove every obstacle to independence of conduct on your part.' Poor 'Goose,' in fact, was put on her honour; and, although she wrote to Byron from time to time—in that one respect, she was proof against moral browbeating—her tone became more and more evasive, more platitudinous and less heartfelt. Byron resented her 'damned crinkum-crankum. . . .' The protracted struggle between Byron and his 'Clytemnestra'—with Augusta and Ada Byron as the disputed ground—lasted as long as the poet's life, as long as the passion that had inspired it, but may be summed up at this stage of his career. It was a victory—a Pyrrhic victory—for Lady Byron. The Byronic sinners were never to meet again; Byron was never to see Ada; the illicit passion was to die a lingering death. But how poignant, and how moving, the death-throes were! I have already quoted from a letter to Augusta, written by Byron in 1819, and further quotation will leave no doubt of his intimate agony:

'My own xxxx,¹ we may have been very wrong, but I repent of nothing except that cursed marriage, and your refusing to continue to love me as you had loved me. I can neither forget nor *quite forgive* you for that precious piece of reformation; but I can never be other than I have been, and whenever I love anything it is

¹ The symbol engraved on the brooches that both Byron and Augusta wore; referred to by Byron, in his wife's presence, at Six Mile Bottom.

because it reminds me in some way or other of yourself. . . . it is heartbreaking to think of our long Separation, and I am sure more than punishment enough for all our sins. Dante is more humane in his 'Hell', for he places his unfortunate lovers (Francesca of Rimini and Paolo whose case fell a good deal short of *ours*, though sufficiently naughty) in company and, though they suffer, it is at least together. If ever I return to England, it will be to see you. And recollect that in all time, and place, and feelings, I have never ceased to be the same to you in heart. Circumstances may have ruffled my manner, and hardened my spirit. You may have seen me harsh and exasperated with all things around me, grieved and tortured with *your new resolution*, and the soon after persecution of that infamous fiend who drove me from my Country and conspired against my life, by endeavouring to deprive me of all that could render it precious; but remember that, even then, *you* were the sole object that cost me a tear. And *what tears!* Do you remember *our* parting . . . ? They say absence destroys weak passions, and confirms strong ones. Alas! *mine* for you is the union of all passions and of all affections, has strengthened itself but will destroy me. I do not speak of *physical* destruction, for I have endured and can endure much, but of the annihilation of all thoughts, feelings or hopes which have not more or less a reference to you and to *our recollections*.'

Occasionally, his regrets took a calmer tone:

'What a fool I was to marry, and *you* not very wise, my dear. We might have lived so single and so happy, as old maids and bachelors. I shall never find anyone like you, nor you (vain as it may seem) like me. We are just formed to pass our lives together; and, therefore, we—at least, I—am by a crowd of circumstances removed from the only being who could ever have loved me, or whom I can unmixedly feel attached to.'¹

But by this time he had realised that it was all in vain. The debauchery and degradation of his life at Venice, the 'ignominious fan-carrying bondage' of his life at Ravenna, were to numb, if they could not annihilate, that earlier memory.

¹ First published by Lord Lovelace in *Astarte*. It has been suggested by the poet's self-appointed defenders that they may have been addressed to some other correspondent. But no suitable candidate has yet been put forward; and, if not addressed to Augusta, it is difficult to see how they could have come into Lady Byron's hands.

By way of Milan, where he lost Polidori, the troublesome private physician he had brought out from England, and briefly encountered Henri Beyle, better known as Stendhal, who thought him affected and strangely snobbish, the poet reached Venice in November. The epilogue of his tragedy had now begun. It was not that his genius was on the wane, or that his interest in his fellow-men was dying down; but his life had now passed its dramatic climax and all that was left to him was observation and recollection. He had aged fast; in his hair were threads of grey; the memories multitudinous and mostly bitter, which had piled up around him and beneath his feet, seemed a far more accurate record of his real age than the years, still less than thirty, he was supposed to have numbered. He adored youth, and he had adored his own youth; the prodigality of the course he ran at Venice, although to some extent dictated by bravado—he would show his critics that he was the rake they had always imagined him—was the fierce but expiring outburst of his youthful passions. 'Sin's long labyrinth,' so often celebrated at a time when he had scarcely crossed its threshold, was realised in his gloomy palace on the Grand Canal.

Byron's letters are his biographers' despair. No one could tell the story of his relationship with Marianna Segati, wife of a draper in the Frezzeria, where he lodged, or with the baker's wife, Margarita Cogni, more vividly than Byron has told it himself. Long and brilliant letters were sent to Moore; John Murray, in his decorous parlour at Albemarle Street, was able to read aloud to his cultured audience, who smiled and nodded, no doubt, and shook their heads, lively descriptions of these fascinating and alarming females; how Marianna was 'in her appearance altogether like an antelope'; how she had large black entrancing eyes, and was passionately, even murderously, possessive. Margarita was as violent and hard to manage; 'she had the strength of an Amazon, with the temper of Medea. . . .' But this was in 1818, when his original modest flat in a Venetian side-street had been exchanged for the Palazzo Mocenigo, and a single love affair for the diversions of an entire harem.

Shelley, meeting him again, was shocked and perturbed. Byron seemed to be plunged in sullen ennui, which grew deeper with every advance in dissipation. The fact was, he told Peacock, that 'the Italian women with whom he associates are perhaps the most con-

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temptible of all who exist under the moon.' He was familiar with 'the lowest sort of these women, the people his *gondolieri* pick up in the street,' and with their male counterparts, 'wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of men. . . . He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself.' His palace was a scene of the maddest confusion; combining the disadvantages of a brothel and a wild beast show, it housed, besides a pack of servants and odalisques, a menagerie of dogs, monkeys and large birds, who wandered at will on the grand staircase. A wolf and a fox were confined below; the master of this disreputable establishment was sometimes so distracted by its inmates' quarrels, that he took to his gondola and passed the night on the lagoon. At the end of 1818, it was said that 'he looked forty. His face had become pale, bloated, and sallow. He had grown very fat, his shoulders broad and round, and the knuckles of his hands were lost in fat.' With his greying ringlets, his jewellery and his plump hands—he bit his nails as he lounged vaguely about the room—he was the very image of a superannuated man of pleasure.

Yet he was a poet, too, engaged on his best work. *Don Juan* was rapidly going forward, an epic poem 'meant to be a little quietly facetious upon everything,' into which he had discharged all the levity of his satirical humour and which he was to decorate with some of his most captivating lyrical passages. He had dashed off his ill-fated autobiography, and had also scribbled in a letter to Tom Moore,¹ written during the aftermath of the Venetian Carnival, the least imperfect short poem he would ever achieve:

*So, we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.*

*For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.*

*Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.*

¹ Dated February 28th, 1817.

Could nostalgia be expressed in simpler imagery? Rides on the beach at the Lido with Shelley or Hoppner, where the English tourists gathered to watch him pass, memories, manuscripts, long letters—his life, for all its superficial self-indulgence, its background of lust and hatred and eccentricity, was not exciting and always very much the same. He had written to Augusta of his fatal heritage:

*A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.*

But the 'inheritance of storms' seemed to have blown over, and, if it was not peace that he now felt—that he was never to experience—it was, at any rate, a sort of melancholy monotonous calm. For youth and youthful passions had had their day; Byron put Venice and its pleasures behind him, at the very end of December 1819—in a few weeks he was to attain the age of thirty-two—as the quasi-legitimate lover of a married woman.

His mistress was the Contessa Guiccioli. She was not clever, nor, indeed, was she radiantly beautiful, since her head and shoulders were out of proportion to the rest of her body; but she had attached herself to Byron with the coils of sentiment. In many ways, he was an easy-going man; he had paid court to the Countess in a Venetian salon, and when the lady took his courtship *au grand sérieux* and insisted that he should become her titular lover, with all the constancy and fine feeling that the rôle implied, he had groaned but submitted to the yoke. Once again, a woman had made him her victim; 'I should like to know,' he wailed to his friend Hoppner, 'who has been carried off—except poor dear *me*. I have been more ravished myself than anybody since the Trojan war.' Before long, the Countess's elderly husband—a very polite personage, but I wish he would not carry me out in his coach and six, like Whittington and his Cat—had left his wife entirely on the poet's hands. In due course, he adopted the whole family; Pietro Gamba, Teresa's young and romantic brother, Count Gamba, her venerable white-haired father, were the accompaniment of an almost married existence. Ravenna was the scene of his new life. This dull decaying town, with its marshes and pine forest, its local society and its liberal plots—the Gambas were ardent *Carbonari*, and Byron took a part in their intrigues against the Austrian overlord—was his home till the September of 1821. Petty conspiracies were a substitute for active life, the Guiccioli a substitute for genuine passion—he made love, he said,

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'by the clock'—but otherwise there was little enough to occupy him: rides in the forest and practice at shooting, debauches of soda-water, abstemious meals and the travail of authorship.

His activities were suspected by the police. The revolutionary movement he had helped to foster was suppressed in the summer of 1821 and the Gamba family banished from their native city. He followed them to Pisa during the autumn; his household at the Palazzo Guiccioli had included the same menagerie as he had supported at Venice—ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, five peacocks, an eagle, a crow, a falcon, two guinea-hens and an Egyptian crane: such, at least, was the catalogue Shelley gave—and his illegitimate daughter by Claire Clairmont. She had been born in England, and Shelley had brought her to Italy; the education of this unfortunate little girl, whose mother Byron refused to see, caused Shelley endless trouble and much anxiety, since his good nature was exploited by both parents. He hurried backwards and forwards between Claire and Byron. The poet was casually fond of Allegra, and his one-time mistress would neither keep her nor give her up; despatched to a convent near Ravenna, where she remained when Byron moved house, she died of fever in the April of the next year.

Allegra's death filled Byron with remorse; Shelley had advised, Claire had pleaded, but he had been obstinate or neglectful, or both together. Sometimes callous, he was often merely lazy; his laziness was partly responsible for the child's death; but a far more unedifying side of his character was revealed by his conduct towards the Shelleys in a hotly disputed and still controversial episode. It occurred while he was living at Ravenna; a nursemaid, whom the Shelleys had dismissed, spread a scandal which Hoppner repeated to Byron and at which Byron cynically shrugged his shoulders. 'Of the facts . . .' he observed, 'there can be little doubt; it is just like them.' The facts, or rather the fiction, which he thus accepted—for the story, from beginning to end, was completely apocryphal—credited Claire and Shelley with an intrigue and with systematic ill-treatment of Mary Shelley. It was said that Claire had borne Shelley a child and, on the day of its birth, he had consigned it to the Foundling Hospital. Byron, although he recognised his friend's goodness, not only accepted the scandalous story at its face value, but proceeded to betray his first informant. He broke the promise Hoppner had exacted, and blabbed to Shelley, who thereupon wrote to his absent wife, suggesting that she should write to Mrs. Hoppner; Byron would act as intermediary. Mary composed a furious denial, which was handed to the poet for

transmission. It was found, apparently still undelivered,¹ among Byron's private papers after his death.

The incident shows Byron at his very worst; his combination of aimless cynicism and selfish lethargy, his invariable—almost hysterical—lack of reticence, are displayed in uncompromising relief. The outlines of his character had hardened and coarsened; he was rich now, according to the standards of Italian society, for Newstead had been sold after years of bargaining, and duns and bailiffs no longer troubled his repose. He could be generous in his own erratic way; but the love of money was beginning to gain a hold and soon threatened to replace his more sanguine passions. He checked the household account-books with meticulous patience; it pleased him in the intervals of work and exercise, of attending the Guiccioli and writing letters, to be able to find mistakes in his steward's arithmetic. And then, his health, like his bank balance, was an object of care; always haunted by the dread of nervous dyspepsia, he ate little—usually vegetables or dry biscuits—though he drank gin-and-water when he was working at night.

Above all, he was a very lonely man. Of course, he had devoted friends in England, and they visited him in Italy from time to time; yet he felt that he was losing touch with the world he knew. It was so difficult to conduct business by correspondence. He wrote perpetually, asking for books, magnesia, tooth-powder—he had a horror of the deterioration that comes with age, and only the best tooth-powder was good enough—but the huge parcels, sent in charge of visiting friends, were often lost or contained the wrong commodities. Murray was disappointed by the poetic dramas; *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*—they had cost Byron much labour and he liked them well, but posterity has endorsed his publisher's judgment. La Guiccioli disapproved of *Don Juan*. He had agreed, in deference to her prejudices, that the last cantos should be written in a more moral strain; the blonde, sentimental, romantic Teresa had become an immovable adjunct of his daily life.

His English friends in Italy hardly suited him. There was Shelley—at any rate a gentleman, but a crank and enthusiast of the first water, shrill-voiced, untidy, with glittering eyes—whom Byron had affectionately dubbed 'The Snake' and compared to a serpent 'walking about on the tip of its tail'; and there was Mary Shelley, that prim and censorious woman. They thought him worldly, he knew, selfish

¹ Some reasons for believing that Byron may perhaps have communicated this letter are set forth by the editor, John Murray, on p. 191, Vol. II, of *Lord Byron's Correspondence*.

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and cynical; he pretended to be shocked by their solemn atheism and the Bohemian disorder in which they lived. It was the Shelleys who had introduced Trelawny. That engaging but undependable buccaneer was certainly no 'gentleman' in the stricter sense, and neither washed his hands nor told the truth, yet had many of the characteristics Byron admired. For one thing, he was aggressively 'a man's man'. But Trelawny was inclined to distrust the poet. Only to Tom Medwin, a 'perplexing simpleton' who loved to hear a man of genius gossip and made a meticulous note of all that he said, could he unburden himself with truly Byronic freedom.

But such associates were tolerable, compared to Hunt. He had met the reformer in 1813, when Hunt, with a piano and a painted ceiling, flowers and books, his children and his wife, was installed, not uncomfortably, in the Surrey gaol where he had been committed for a libel on the Prince Regent. In 1820, Hunt had fallen ill; and Shelley, always tireless in the cause of friendship, had persuaded Byron to suggest that he should come to Italy and there edit a paper entitled *The Liberal*. Byron and Hunt were to collaborate. After a long, stormy, miserable sea voyage, the Hunt family arrived in June 1822—seven children, Leigh Hunt and his vixenish wife, their maid-servant and a milch-goat, presented by friends.

Byron was at his country villa near Leghorn, 'the hottest-looking house' Hunt had ever seen, its salmon-pink walls 'flaring over the country. . . .' At the moment of Hunt's appearance, all was confusion. Young Count Gamba had been stabbed by a rascally servant; his sister was flushed, agitated and dishevelled; while Byron, who had grown so fat as to be scarcely recognisable and whose hair descended 'in thin ringlets about his throat'—altogether, he presented 'a very different aspect from the compact, energetic, curly-headed person, whom I had known in London'—attempted to 'damp all this fire with his cool tones, and an air of voluptuous indolence.' When he left the house, he assumed a velvet cap and a 'loose riding-coat of mazarin blue,' with the result that he looked 'more lordly . . . but hardly less foreign.'

Shelley was as enthusiastic and helpful as ever. He had hurried to Pisa to greet the Hunts, and spent Sunday, June 7th, in his friend's company. The following day, he set sail for the port of Leghorn; Trelawny, on the deck of Byron's yacht, saw the little boat, bound for Lerici, where the Shelleys lived, carrying Shelley, Williams and a young sailor, vanish in a fine mist that covered the waves. Towards evening, he noticed signs of an approaching tempest; the air had grown ominously dark, and the dim discoloured expanse of the oily

sea 'looked as solid and smooth as a sheet of lead. . . . Gusts of wind swept over without ruffling it, and big drops of rain fell on its surface, rebounding, as if they could not penetrate it.' Fishing craft and coasting vessels came rushing by, under bare poles, fouling the ships in the harbour. The violent thunder-squall that burst directly overhead swallowed up Shelley and his companions.

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Byron was among the gathering at Shelley's funeral pyre. Both Trelawny and Leigh Hunt have left vivid narratives of those gruesome and pathetic rites on the Spezzian beach, at the margin of a placid and brilliant sea. Byron watched the cremation for a short time, saw Shelley's brains boiling in his broken skull—a ghastly detail to which he afterwards referred—then stripped and swam out to his anchored yacht. Poor Shelley!—but all who knew him were ill-fated. Meanwhile, Leigh Hunt and his seven children, and the sharp-tongued and unattractive Mrs. Hunt, were the legacy which Shelley had bestowed on his friend. Byron accepted it against his will; but for Shelley, they would never have made the voyage, and he now discovered that Hunt's journalistic prospects were considerably less bright than he had been led to imagine, since Hunt no longer edited the famous *Examiner*. Somewhat grudgingly, he shouldered his obligations. The squabble which Hunt witnessed at Byron's villa—the culmination of a series of such affairs—had preluded the second banishment of the Gamba family; during the early autumn, Byron removed to Genoa, where the Hunts were established at an adjacent palace.

From the first, it had been a divided and distracted partnership. Byron's enthusiasm for *The Liberal* declined as quickly as it had arisen, to be followed by deep dislike for the entire plan. His friends in London did their utmost to dissuade him; 'this man wrote to him, and that wrote, and another came. Mr. Hobhouse rushed over the Alps, not knowing which was the more awful, the mountains or the magazine.' Its opening numbers, nevertheless, were allowed to appear; but, as the failure of their common effort became more evident, Byron's attitude towards Hunt grew more discouraging and Hunt's sensitiveness more and more irascible. The poet made much of his inherited rank; Leigh Hunt, the type of inverted snob, determined that Byron's title should not awe him, cultivated an air of manly independence, while his wife gave a forbidding display of middle-class dignity. The Hunt children were noisy and insubordin-

ate; Byron compared them to a kraal of Hottentots, said that they were 'dirtier and more mischievous than Yahoos,' and set his bulldog on its guard against 'the little Cockneys.' It was the same bulldog that savaged Mrs. Hunt's goat and bit off one of the unfortunate animal's ears.

Altogether, the experiment had been going badly. Hunt, at his study-table, when they lived in Pisa, listened with anguish to Byron's voice from the floor above singing snatches of Rossini 'in a swaggering style,' as he rose late after sitting up to write *Don Juan*. Presently, still warbling, he would reach the courtyard; 'Leontius!' he used to shout under Hunt's window, and the unhappy reformer would join him in the small garden, where la Guiccioli, her blonde tresses sleek and unbraided, often met them among the shadow and scent of the orange-trees. Byron's lordly insouciance enraged the democrat; there he was 'sitting in health and wealth, with rings on his fingers and baby-work to his shirt,' having 'just issued, like a sultan, out of his bath,' while Hunt received his bounty, a helpless pensioner. The poet's bounty was not inadequate, Hunt admitted, nor did he scruple to apply for funds—in money matters, he was always a decided communist—but Byron's lack of delicacy was sometimes galling. The good-humoured amateur of flowers and music, the devoted father, the accomplished poetaster, the innocent voluptuary—like Harold Skimpole, he asked so little of an unkind world!—became the acrid and vulgar critic of the *Recollections*.

Hunt had his posthumous revenge. In the meantime, he ate his heart out at Pisa and Genoa, sneered covertly at Byron and his mistress—la Guiccioli was a 'buxom parlour-boarder,' affectedly elegant and affectedly learned—until the attempted partnership had died a natural death. Some ten months were spent by Byron at his Genoese house; his existence there, calm, regular and extremely dull, was enlivened during the spring of 1823 by the arrival of a brilliant English party. Lord and Lady Blessington were staying at Genoa: Marguerite Blessington, in later life a successful novelist and the friend and hostess of Dickens, Thackeray and Louis Napoleon, was then at the zenith of her beauty and charm. Her husband was a rich and eccentric peer; her lover, that young Adonis, Comte Alfred d'Orsay, who travelled with the Blessingtons wherever they went, a renowned virtuoso and man of fashion. What a relief, after querulous Cockney scribblers and the insipid sentimentalism of an Italian mistress, for Byron to breathe the atmosphere of civilised London life!

Indeed, he was quite pathetically glad to meet them—so glad that

Lady Blessington, a born romantic, who had approached the poet's threshold with terror and reverence, was a trifle shocked by his manifold assiduities. Where was the gloomy aloofness she had expected to find? Byron joked and gossiped and repeated anecdotes, very often exceedingly malicious, with a gusto bred of solitude and ennui. He had little reticence, as she very soon discovered: 'I had expected to find him a dignified, cold, reserved and haughty person, but nothing can be more different; for were I to point out the prominent defect of Lord Byron, I should say it was flippancy, and a total want of that natural self-possession and dignity which ought to characterise a man of birth and education.' His pretensions were those of a man of the world; he evinced a decided 'taste for aristocracy' and showed a desire to be considered 'more *un homme de société* than a poet'; yet his pretensions, like his clothes, were out of date. Loneliness and foreign exile had changed his appearance; the dandy of 1813 and 1814 had lost touch with the England he had once known. The figure he cut was both unfashionable and strangely foreign. Not only did he sleep in a huge armorial bed, embellished with large coronets at the four corners, but his equipment when he accompanied her on her daily ride was such as few English noblemen would have deemed appropriate.

'His horse,' wrote Lady Blessington, 'was literally covered with various trappings, in the way of cavassons, martingales, and Heaven knows how many other (to me) unknown inventions. . . . His dress consisted of a nankeen jacket and trousers, which appeared to have shrunk from washing . . . a black stock, very narrow; a dark blue velvet cap with a shade, and a very rich gold band and a large gold tassel at the crown; nankeen gaiters, and a pair of blue spectacles, completed his costume.' As they rode, he talked in his eager rambling way. Lady Blessington filled her diary with Byron's small-talk and, omitting his more scandalous flights of memory, afterwards published her volume of *Conversations*. An echo of Byron's voice enlivens its pages. That extraordinary combination of strength and weakness, of sentimentality, savagery and tender feeling, of irresponsibility and tragic gravity, which fate had woven into the texture of Byron's spirit, to baffle and delight those who encountered him, emerges in some image or single line.

For he understood himself but dimly, as Goethe had said; and it was easy, no doubt, then as it is now, to smile a little at this self-conscious and diffident personage—this small limping man in his shrunken jacket, whose carefully macassared curls were turning grey—on whose fragile shoulders had accumulated such a weight of

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legend. But, if Byron was the author of his legend, he was also its victim; and there are many signs that he rebelled against the movement of his destiny. His sentimental friendship with Lady Blessington was his last glimpse of the possibility of prosaic happiness. When he parted from the Blessingtons, he shed tears.

In every human span, psychologists tell us, there occurs a moment when the flux becomes a reflux, and the love of life is replaced by the love of death. Then death is the goal unconsciously hankered after; death alone, as Byron must have recognized, could give him back the freshness of his fame and revive a somewhat obscured and tarnished glory. 'The under-current of his mind,' Trelawny wrote, 'was always drifting towards the East.' Shelley's disappearance had left his friend profoundly unsettled and uneasy, so that he longed for some radical change of scene. Perhaps he would migrate to the New World; for thirty thousand pounds, it should be possible 'to buy a principality in one of the South American States—Chili or Peru.' The news that a Whig committee had been formed in London, to assist the Greek insurgents in their struggle against the Turks, gave his plans a more definite orientation.

The revolt in Greece had been proceeding since 1821; checked at the disastrous battle of Peta, which had been fought in 1822, the cause of freedom was still further hampered by the differences, sometimes amounting to civil war, which existed among the various Greek chieftains. By the middle of January 1823, the Turkish armies had abandoned the siege of Missolonghi and withdrawn to Albania; but Greece, divided up between no less than three fiercely antagonistic national parties, each claiming the suffrage and assistance of the outside world, was very far from presenting an organised front. It was 'towards the end of February,' according to Gamba, that Byron's thoughts began to veer in the direction of Greece; and at the same time he had suggested to his old friend, Hobhouse, who, with Kinnaid, was a prominent member of the Greek Committee, that he might be willing to assist it in its work. Hobhouse communicated this tentative offer; in April, a delegate of the Committee, travelling out to Greece to survey the field, visited him and was again promised his support. A letter of acceptance clinched the proposal, and Byron laid his plans for leaving Italy.

II

When Byron said goodbye to Italy, he also said goodbye to literature; with the exception of three comparatively unimportant lyrics,

the interesting but uneven poem that his editors have entitled *Love and Death* and the valedictory verses written at Missolonghi, headed *January 22nd; on this day I complete my thirty-sixth year*, he was never to attempt a poem again. The poetic career that lay behind him can be divided into seven main periods. The first produced *Hours of Idleness*, a collection of juvenile effusions that show remarkably little promise of what the writer was to achieve in later life. During the second, Byron revealed his talents as a poetic satirist and took his revenge on the critics of his early work with *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, an energetic piece of literary diatribe that owes much to the influence of Dryden and Pope, and, both in spirit and in form, recalls the satires of the previous age. Byron's true gifts did not begin to emerge until he reached his third period, when the opening cantos of *Childe Harold* struck an entirely new note. There followed the series of Eastern Tales, which, although they may strike us today as somewhat artificial and insubstantial, delighted readers of his own period and helped to increase his already enormous popularity. Yet Byron was still a juvenile poet, an exceptionally brilliant young man striking a romantic attitude; and it is to the explosive effect of his personal experiences between 1812 and 1816 that we owe the concluding cantos of *Childe Harold* and some of the shorter poems that he wrote about the same time. Such was the fifth period of his literary career, the period that disclosed a man of genius; while, during the sixth and seventh, he was chiefly occupied with his poetic dramas—of which he himself was exceedingly proud but which did not satisfy his contemporary audience—and embarked on the composition of *Don Juan*, unquestionably his greatest work, the most original of all his poems, the most various and the most imaginative, in which Byron exhibited the range of his gifts, tragic and satirical alike, as they had never been exhibited before. Shelley's generous tribute deserves quotation. 'I despair of rivalling Lord Byron,' he confessed; with the fifth canto of *Don Juan*, he said Byron had achieved in a certain degree, what I have long preached of producing—something wholly new and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful.' He had raised a prosaic hero and an essentially modern subject to the timeless plane of poetic literature.

Don Juan, moreover, has the fascination of a self-portrait. Not because the Don is a looking-glass image, though he incorporates many of the poet's features, but because, during the leisurely course of this long, diffuse and rambling narrative, all the divergent strains in Byron's character are represented with complete fidelity. He had set out, he told his publisher, John Murray, to be 'a little

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quietly facetious upon everything'; but, accompanying the satirical facetiousness, we detect a vein of deep seriousness. The effect is often enchantingly comic, as his description of his unforgiving wife, who, for the purposes of the story, plays the part of Don Juan's mother:

*His mother was a learned lady, famed
For every branch of every science known—
In every Christian language ever named,
With virtues equall'd by her wit alone:
She made the cleverest people quite ashamed,
And even the good with inward envy groan,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that she did. . . .*

But comedy soon merges into lyricism, as when, remembering his carefree youth, Byron describes the beauty of a small and lonely Greek island:

*It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.*

*And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'er-passed the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's rain!
Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please,—the more because they preach in vain,—
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after.*

The passage describing the loves of Juan and Haidée, in the solitude of that forgotten island, is among the most memorable that Byron ever composed. But running through this idyllic episode, adding relief to its fresh and vivid colours, is Byron's conviction that every conquest of happiness, even innocent happiness, has at some time to be paid for:

*They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momentarily grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die. . . .*

*Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds eternity cannot annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire—all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.*

When Byron wrote *Don Juan*, he was an ageing, disillusioned and dissipated man; often he set to work late at night, sometimes not entirely sober; and on the back of Canto I he scribbled this revelatory fragment:

*I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling—
Because at least the past were pass'd away—
And for the future—(but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly today,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say—the future is a serious matter—
And so—for God's sake—hock and soda-water!*

But there is no hint of satiety or lassitude in the poems that he wrote at the Palazzo Mocenigo; and, while his fortunes sank to their lowest ebb, his poetic energy reached its zenith. Nowadays a literary critic seldom expatiates on a poet's 'philosophy.' Nor had Byron a philosophy that any critic could honestly pretend to discover. That he had religious leanings, as Sir Walter Scott suggested, seems clear from many scattered references. But his religious beliefs remained unocussed, although his Calvinist childhood and the experiences of his youth had left an ineradicable sense of sin. With these vestiges of a Christian education went a pagan fatalism; and it is the latter that emerges most frequently in the pages of *Don Juan*.

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Here he frequently recommends the pursuit of sensation for its own sake:

*Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion!*

But the gaiety and energy of the poem conceal an underlying melancholy. Both the poet and his hero are predestined wanderers: their endless pilgrimage can never reach its goal. Byron, when he wrote *Don Juan*, was resigned to 'making life an amusement'; but *Don Juan*, after all, is only *Childe Harold* in a satirical guise.

It has been asserted that Byron's works contain very few flashes of 'pure poetry'; and, if applied to much of his earlier writing, the criticism seems not unjust. Byron was a slipshod artist; some of his lines now strike us as hopelessly unmusical; and of *Childe Harold* it is certainly true that the effect of the poem depends on the poem's impetuous speed and strength rather than on the evocative quality of individual passages. Yet even *Childe Harold* includes many lines that linger in the reader's memory, exerting the mysterious evocative power that we associate with the greatest verse. Often they shine forth from their immediate surroundings, as the Golden Bough shone in the grove of Nemi; and some of these magical lines I have transcribed below, italicising the key-phrases:

*. . . parting Day
Dies like the Dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away—
The last still loveliest . . .*
(*Childe Harold*, IV, 29)

*The Moon is up, and yet it is not night—
Sunset divides the sky with her—a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains . . .*
(*Childe Harold*, IV, 27)

*No more—no more—Oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew . . .*
(*Don Juan*, I, 214)

Yet Byron was also a dramatic and sententious poet; and, whereas Keats and Shelley may perhaps be described as inheritors of the Greek Spirit—though neither of them had inherited the Greek feeling for restraint and clarity—their famous rival seems much closer to the grave and measured Latin mode; for Byron's verse, at its rare best, has a Latin sonority and succinctness of expression that recalls now the majestic cadences of Virgil, now the dramatic imagery of a modern Propertius. There is something, for instance, distinctly Virgilian about his picture of the ill-fated Duke of Brunswick on the eve of Waterloo, as he listens to the premonitory rumble of the approaching tempest:

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated Chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear . . .
(*Childe Harold*, III, 23)

Byron's fatalism (which he shared with the noblest Latin poets), his sense of the *lacrimae rerum* and of the insoluble problem of human destiny, reappears again and again throughout his work:

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison,—a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches . . .
(*Childe Harold*, III, 34)

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life . . .
(*Childe Harold*, III, 5)

I've taught me other tongues—and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger . . .
(*Childe Harold*, IV, 8)

The effect of such passages depends upon the *condensation* of feeling: idea and image, emotion and music, are fused into an indivisible whole.

In conclusion, something must be said about the magnificent quality of Byron's prose. His most ambitious prose work, the celebrated *Memoirs*, fell victim to his friends' scruples; and, although transcripts were made at the time, they too seem to have vanished beyond recovery. But three fragmentary journals and a collection of *Detached Thoughts* were preserved among his private papers, while

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his correspondence provides an incomparable record of every period of the poet's life. Few more naturally gifted letter-writers have ever taken up a pen. In his correspondence, as in his conversation, he was sometimes wildly indiscreet. His candour is often astonishing; but there are also letters in which he appears to adopt a deliberately Byronic pose, such as the long chronicle of his amatory misdeeds that he compiled for Lady Melbourne's benefit. But candour is perpetually breaking in; and, even when he is least sincere, he never fails to express himself with intensity and energy. Take, for example, this fragment of a letter to the detestable Mrs. Byron dashed off at the age of sixteen: '... The way to *riches*, to *greatness* lies before me. I can, I will cut myself a path thro' the world or perish in the attempt. ... I will carve myself the passage to Grandeur, but never with Dishonour. These, Madam, are my intentions.' Here speaks the rebellious schoolboy. But now, by way of complete contrast, turn to this picture of Margarita Cogni, his disreputable Venetian favourite. He has already related how, while returning from the Lido, he was caught by a sudden squall and his gondola was nearly swamped:

'On' our return, after a tight struggle, I found her on the open steps ... with her great black eyes flashing thro' her tears, and the long dark hair, which was streaming, drenched with rain, over her brows and breast. ... The wind blowing her hair and dress about her tall thin figure, and the lightning flashing around her, with the waves rolling at her feet, made her look like Medea alighted from her chariot, or the Sibyl of the tempest. ... On seeing me safe, she did not wait to greet me ... but calling out to me—*Ah! can' della Madonna, xe esto il tempo per andar' al' Lido* (ah! Dog of the Virgin, is this a time to go to the Lido?) ran into the house, and solaced herself with scolding the boatmen. ... Her joy at seeing me again was moderately mixed with ferocity, and gave me the idea of a tigress over her recovered cubs.'

Curiously enough, the finest appreciation of Byron's talents as a prose-writer comes from the autobiography of John Ruskin, who might have been expected to feel little sympathy with so passionate and so uncontrolled a spirit. It occurs in the first volume of *Praeterita*, under the chapter-heading 'Vester, Camenae'. Byron wrote (Ruskin tells us that he had noticed while he was still an impressionable child) 'as easily as a hawk flies, and as clearly as a lake reflects, the exact truth in the precisely narrowest terms; not only the exact truth, but the most central and useful one. ... The modern reader ... is usually so ignorant of the essential qualities of Byron, that I cannot go farther

in the story of my own novitiate under him without illustrating, by rapid example, the things which I saw to be unrivalled in his work. For this purpose I take his common prose. . . . Read . . . the sentence on Sheridan, in his letter to Thomas Moore, from Venice, June 1st . . . 1818.' Ruskin quotes an extract, then adds his commentary: ' . . . Observe that the passage is noble, primarily because it contains the utmost number that will come together into the space, of absolutely just, wise, and kind thoughts. But it is more than noble, it is *perfect*, because the quantity it holds is not artificially or intricately concentrated, but with the serene swiftness of a smith's hammer-strokes on hot iron; and with choice of terms which, each in its place, will convey far more than they mean in the dictionary.'

Later, Ruskin singles out two very different specimens of his hero's prose-style—'two sentences on poetry in his letters to Murray of September 15th, 1817, and April 12th, 1818'—remarking that there is 'nothing which needs explanation in the brevities and amenities of these two fragments, except, in the first of them, the distinctive and exhaustive enumeration of the qualities of great poetry', but that each of them is complete in itself, the effect of completeness being achieved without a hint of literary artifice. One might argue, of course, that Byron's letters are often neither 'just' nor 'kind': that he dealt with many subjects less exalted than the art of poetry: and that on occasion he is the gossip pure and simple, the scandalous chronicler of his own follies and the follies and absurdities of other men. But the 'force' and 'precision' and rhythmic eloquence that Ruskin had noted, and here recommends to the nineteenth-century critic, are just as apparent in his most frivolous, as in his most sententious, epistolary flights. There is no doubt that he was a splendid storyteller; and his insight into personal relationships might have made him a supremely gifted novelist. He had, moreover, an exquisite sense of fun, which ranged from delicate satire to the broadest knock-about humour; with the result that some of his letters are masterpieces of comic writing. But, whatever his mood may be, he is always himself. His personality is written large on almost every scrap of paper that he committed to the post-bag, whether he is pleading with his wife, teasing his publisher, chronicling a passionate escapade or unravelling a tangled skein of memories. In line after line we catch the echo of his voice, as he declaims or vituperates or thinks aloud; and it is a voice that, once heard, continues to haunt the listener's imagination. It grows deeper, but does not lose its gaiety until he has embarked upon his last voyage.

Byron set out for Greece in no exuberant or romantic mood. He had seen enough of modern Levantines to understand that the people whose cause he had championed were a very different race from their classical progenitors. He had a premonition that this journey would be his last; once before, when he was still living in Pisa, he had told Medwin that he believed he would die in Greece, and with Lady Blessington he recurred to the same idea. The cause was worthy of him; above all, it was an excuse for action. During the tedious and busy weeks of the early summer, when the details of the voyage were being arranged, Byron devoted his patience and skill—verse-writing, love and idleness had been put behind him—to determining and attempting to satisfy the needs of the rebels. The Greeks lacked artillery, he informed the Committee; for his own part, he was taking them medical stores and a large sum of money in bills and cash, while his presence would encourage the flotation of a Greek Loan. He had chartered an English brig, *The Hercules*, which he equipped with barrels of gunpowder and two small cannon.

Pietro Gamba was to accompany him, and so was Trelawny. They were attended by a young Italian surgeon, and by eight servants, including Fletcher, his English valet, his Venetian gondolier and Trelawny's negro groom. There were five horses on board and a couple of dogs. Not until the 13th of July, when the various difficulties, both practical and sentimental, that stood in the way of the expedition, had been finally and painfully overcome, could Byron and his friends embark on the brig, only to suffer the annoyance of a false start. A dead calm was succeeded by contrary winds; during the 16th, *The Hercules* left Genoa, reaching Leghorn, where they were joined by two Greek gentlemen and a youthful Scotch enthusiast, named Hamilton Browne, after an unadventurous five days' voyage.

Then again they set sail, on the 23rd. Byron's temper was serene and his spirits were high; he appreciated the masculine microcosm of a small ship, the regular simple life and the feeling of movement, the absence of women and the presence of friends. For the time being, at any rate, he was almost young; he and Trelawny laid hands on the captain's waistcoat—it was of scarlet, and the captain was extremely stout—each slipped an arm through its capacious arm-holes and jumped overboard, as Byron said, to 'take the shine out of it.' Day by day brought them nearer to the shores of Greece; and Greece, ever

since the Albanian tour, those happy adventurous years of Eastern travel when the promise of fame and the threat of tragedy were still remote, had always bulked large in his imagination. It had come to symbolise youth and the freedom from care. The Greeks themselves, as he had explained to Lady Blessington, were likely to prove ungrateful and refractory. It was the country, and not its people, that really drew him. At best, the scene of a glorious rehabilitation—the world should learn that he was something better than a mere poet—at worst, it would make a splendid and fitting grave.

On the 2nd of August, they sighted the Ionian Islands. 'I don't know why it is,' Byron observed, pointing out the distant mountains of the Morea, 'but I feel as if the eleven long years of bitterness I have passed through since I was here were taken off my shoulders, and I was scudding through the Greek Archipelago with old Bathurst, in his frigate.' Next morning, they entered the harbour of Cephallonia. The Ionian Islands in 1823, under the benevolent but autocratic rule of Sir Thomas Maitland, had been enjoying British protection for some eight years. Their neutrality was rigidly enforced by the Governor; on the other hand, since his mission was nominally private, no objection was raised to Byron's landing. Cephallonia made a convenient and comfortable base-camp, from which to study the intricate progress of Greek politics.

Napier, the Resident, was a pronounced Philhellene. He had been away when Byron first appeared; but, no sooner had he returned, than he 'urged Byron, and indeed all of us,' writes Trelawny, 'to take up our quarters at his house; from first to last, all the English on the island, the military as well as the civilians, vied with each other in friendly and hospitable acts. Byron preferred staying on board; every afternoon he and I crossed the harbour in a boat, and landed on a rock to bathe; on one of these occasions he held out his right leg to me, saying: "I hope this accursed limb will be knocked off in the war." "It won't improve your swimming," I answered. "I will exchange legs if you will give me a portion of your brains." "You would repent your bargain," he said; "at times I feel my brains boiling, as Shelley's did whilst you were grilling him."'

From Cephallonia, the whole party visited Ithaca. Byron enjoyed the beauty of its streams and mountains, but refused to pretend an interest in its ancient sites. 'Do I look like one of those emasculated fogies?' he enquired irritably. 'Let's have a swim. I detest antiquarian twaddle. Do people think that I have no lucid intervals, that I came to Greece to scribble more nonsense? I will show them I can do something better: I wish I had never written a line.' At a monastery

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where they were received, the thunder-clouds burst; exasperated by a complimentary address, he 'vented his ire in a torrent of Italian execrations on the holy Abbot and all his brotherhood,' then snatched up a lamp and left the room. It was for action, not speeches, he had come to Greece; yet action proved a mistress hard to woo. Baffled by the sordid labyrinth of Greek politics, none too sure, it may be, of his own abilities—one cannot become an administrator by merely wishing it—he settled down to pass the summer in a country cottage.

Summer turned to autumn, and autumn to winter. Trelawny, disgusted by his indecision—he had had bad dreams and seemed neurotic and ill-disposed—left him to try his luck on the Greek mainland. And so Trelawny passes out of Byron's existence. Life at Metaxata, he realised, was threatening to approximate to life at Genoa, to life at Pisa, to life at Ravenna among the pine-forests; in routine, the dream of action would soon be lost. Trelawny's annoyance was unfair, though comprehensible; it is very difficult to go to the help of an oppressed nation, if its leaders have broken up into squabbling coteries and each coterie regards you as its destined prey. A large sum of ready-money was involved. Alone in his little house with Gamba and Bruno, looking down on to the wine-purple Ionian Sea, the distracted poet tried to balance rival claims. He received emissaries, practised marksmanship, went out riding and, in solitude, devoured the novels of Walter Scott.

'It was a maxim of his,' Trelawny records: "'If I am stopped for six days at any place, I cannot be made to move for six months.'" Almost six months were spent in Cephallonia; he arrived at the beginning of August, and did not leave for Missolonghi till the very end of December 1823, when he had decided to throw in his lot with Prince Mavrocordato. Between Odysseus, who had entrenched himself at Athens, and the ruffianly Colokotronis, who held the Morea, Mavrocordato's authority was somewhat unstable; but it was the nearest approach to a settled government that then existed. Meanwhile British Philhellenes were joining his standard; and among the last to arrive at Metaxata was Colonel Leicester Stanhope, a fervent Benthamite, with an unlimited faith in the virtues of a free Press. He preceded Byron to Missolonghi; Mavrocordato and a squadron of the Greek fleet, the last encouraged to appear by an advance of pay, set sail from Hydra for the same port. The Turkish fleet which had been blockading Western Greece—its presence had excused Byron's delay; that and the condition of Greek politics—now retreated into the inner Gulf of Corinth.

Missolonghi was thus accessible and comparatively safe. Spurred

by the appeals of Mavrocordato, to which were added the complacent reports of Colonel Stanhope, who during his first week on Hellenic soil had already established a republican newspaper and was planning 'schools, presses, posts, hospitals,' in a country still racked by civil war, Byron resolved to enter the fray. Two small local vessels were engaged. In one was Count Gamba, with the baggage and horses; in the other—the smaller and faster of the two—travelled Lord Byron and his personal suite. They sailed on the 28th of December. Byron reached Missolonghi on the 5th, having been delayed by the threatening nearness of a Turkish frigate; Gamba, whose vessel had been actually taken, though it was afterwards dismissed by a kindly Pasha, had arrived safe and sound on the 4th of January.

Missolonghi is not an agreeable town, low-lying, fever-stricken, marshy; but its position on the northern shore of the Gulf, protected by a broad and stagnant mere, gave the place a considerable strategic importance. When the rain fell, its streets were rivers of mud; so deep was the quagmire round the main gateway that it seemed doubtful, in the event of a surprise, whether the attacking force would manage to get through. The accommodation it provided was poor enough; the three-storied house, allotted to Byron, divided by a mud-bank from the lagoon, was damp, depressing, dirty and inconvenient. On the ground-floor he quartered his Souliot guard—picturesque but unscrupulous refugees whom he had enlisted at Cephallonia and sent ahead to become a source of endless trouble at Missolonghi. Colonel Stanhope lodged on the first floor; while Byron, with his books and sabres, his helmets and pistols, and the miniature of his little daughter he always carried—it used to hang over his writing-desk when he lived in Italy—occupied two rooms at the top of the building.

His arrival had been accompanied by a certain flourish. True, the classical helmet of his own design, which he had intended to wear on landing in Greece, had been put aside at Trelawny's instigation. But a borrowed scarlet uniform made up for its loss; cannon sounded, ancient muskets were discharged, and a cheering crowd received him as he stepped on land and walked to his house, where he was greeted by Mavrocordato. Then the excitement died down and he started to work. One cannot but admire the heroic obstinacy with which Byron, during the laborious months that followed, every day almost bringing a new problem, pitted his courage against an irksome and ungrateful task. It was not that he showed himself a born administrator; he had plunged too late into the world of action; he was too weary and much too sensitive for a resounding triumph, and failed in most of

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the objects he had set out to achieve. But his failure was a personal vindication, just as his sufferings were crowned with posthumous success.

His objects may be very briefly summarised; it was expected that the Turkish army would soon return, and Byron, working on behalf of the London Committee, hoped to stiffen and concentrate Greek resistance. He wished to form an artillery brigade; workmen were despatched by the London Philhellenes, in charge of an 'intelligent firemaster,' William Parry, 'with forges, laboratories, and every implement necessary for the fabrication of the *material* of war.'

Unluckily, not only were the English enthusiasts mistaken as to the qualifications of William Parry, but Parry and his workmen—particularly the latter—were rapidly demoralised by the conditions of life in Greece. Besides an artillery corps, Byron had other schemes; the original body of Souliots he had enlisted were to be the nucleus of a force under his command, and at their head he would assault and capture Lepanto. This fortress, with the twin castles of the Gulf of Corinth, and the fortified town of Patras on the southern shore, were the sole vantage-points that still remained in Turkish hands.

Catastrophically, his intentions all miscarried. Lepanto had seemed to promise an easy victory, since its Albanian garrison was anxious to surrender, although they stipulated that their opponents should make a token attack. So January was spent in preparations; the infantry were drilled, the artillery organised, and its officers—Germans and extremely punctilious—reconciled to their Greek allies and one another. On the 18th, a riot broke out in the town. The Souliots and the townspeople had come to blows; musketry fire crackled along the streets; one man was killed and several wounded. Then, the Greek fleet having withdrawn on news of the enemy, Missolonghi was blockaded by a Turkish squadron.

This blockade was not lifted till the 29th. On the 5th of February, the English firemaster made his appearance—he turned out to be sadly lacking in technical skill—and the details of the projected attack were at last arranged. But on the 14th trouble developed among the Souliots; a spy, sent to the town by Colokotronis, who grudged Mavrocordato the prospect of victory, had spread disaffection in their ranks. They now approached Byron with a list of demands; 'they required,' says Gamba, 'that the Government should appoint, out of their number, two generals, two colonels, two captains, and inferior officers in the same proportion; in short, that out of three or four hundred actual Souliots, there should be about one hundred and fifty above the rank of common soldiers. Their object, of course,

was to increase their pay. Mavrocordato was disgusted with their impudent dishonesty, and Lord Byron burst into a violent passion, and protested that he would have no more to do with these people. He decided that the Souliots should be disbanded and a new corps raised and properly disciplined. Meanwhile his cherished plan of an attack on Lepanto must be postponed, at any rate for several weeks.

Rain was falling; it always rained at Missolonghi. Byron retired to his own room, angry, disappointed, at the end of his patience, and lay down to rest upon the sofa. 'He had been extremely annoyed at the vexations caused by the Souliots, as also with the various other interruptions from petitions, demands, and remonstrances, which never left him a moment's peace at any hour of the day. At seven in the evening,' adds Gamba, 'I went into his room on some business . . . he was not asleep, and seeing me enter, called out, "I am not asleep—come in—I am not well."' An hour later, he visited Colonel Stanhope. That pig-headed disciple of Jeremy Bentham was another, though not the most grievous, of Byron's crosses, and there had been argument, and some friction, about his newspaper. But this rainy and dismal evening all was forgiven; sitting on the sofa and joking with Parry whom, bibulous and incompetent as he often proved, the poet found strangely sympathetic, he prepared to drink a glass of cider and water. Then his face changed, he got up, staggered and fell. For some three minutes, his horrified companions watched Byron in the grip of a mysterious seizure, 'dreadfully convulsed,' struggling with his attendants; until he returned to his senses and was carried upstairs.

He asked, 'very coolly,' if he was in danger. "'Let me know," he said. "Do not think I am afraid to die—I am not." . . . 'It is impossible,' Gamba continues, 'to do justice to the coolness and magnanimity which he displayed upon every trying occasion. Upon trifling occasions he was certainly irritable; but the aspect of danger calmed him in an instant, and restored to him the free exercise of all the powers of his noble nature.' Not half an hour had elapsed since Byron's fit when a false alarm set his household by the ears—the Souliots were about to attack the arsenal—and Parry and Gamba prepared for a siege. During their absence, the two Germans who had given the alarm—they were drunk and had seen a body of troops on the move—burst into Byron's room as he lay helpless. Declaring that a revolution was under way, they protested, noisily and roughly, that they had come to defend him.

"Such was the tenor of his new life. Dishonesty, incompetence,

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ill-health, in a town that at the best of times was never healthy and now seemed to be becoming part of the mephitic lagoon, combined to vex, harass him and exhaust his spirits. Not long before, he had composed his valediction:

*The Sword, the Banner, and the Field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free. . . .*

*Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of Beauty be.*

*If thou regrett'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!*

*Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy Rest.*

Passion—beauty—he insinuated, belonged to the past; but it must be recorded that, during his stay in Greece, he seems to have fallen back on an old sentimental habit. His young and handsome Greek page, a refugee whom he had adopted, was the last successor of Edleston and Clare.

Otherwise, his short existence was at an end—short, yet so long in terms of suffering: brilliant, yet seldom happy and never smooth. But fresh disappointments were still to come; on the 17th, news was received at Missolonghi that a Turkish brig had stranded not far from the town, and it was resolved to attempt to capture the ship and its stores. This plan, like others, went astray; the crew escaped after setting fire to the vessel, and Gamba, Parry and Stanhope lost their prize. Gamba returned to Missolonghi on the 19th; he found the two cannon that Byron had brought from Italy pointed, ready for action, against the gate, while in the house prevailed an ominous, terrified silence. There had been a skirmish between the Souliots and the artillerymen; a Souliot had murdered a German officer, and panic and confusion had spread through the city. Next day, with money

Byron advanced, the whole rattle-taggle of Souliot tribesmen was bribed to leave.

Six of the eight English workmen, who had been sent out by the Committee under Parry's charge, now demanded immediate repatriation. They had been promised employment in a place of safety; but 'they said they had heard balls whistle over their heads whilst at work, and that they should be murdered. It was in vain to tell them that the firing of ball was a daily occurrence—they would go. But Mr. Parry remained, with only two men, who were rather assistants than artificers.' This defection, together with the lack of coal, which the London Committee had not thought to provide, and Parry's own blustering inefficiency, 'made us fear that our laboratory would come to nothing.' At a single stroke, Byron lost the Souliots, whom he had counted on to form the nucleus of his infantry corps, and the skilled workmen who were the mainstay of the artillery brigade.

On Saturday, that same week, there was a severe earthquake shock. 'In one week,' Byron observed, 'I have been in a fit; the troops mutinied; the Turkish brig burned; Sass killed; an earthquake; thunder, lightning, and torrents of rain—such a week I never witnessed.' His situation, he added, was 'unbearable.' 'I begin to fear,' he had already informed Gamba, 'that I have done nothing but lose time, money, patience and health; but I was prepared for it: I knew that ours was not a path of roses, and that I ought to make up my mind to meet with deception, and calunyny, and ingratitude.' By comparison March was a tranquil month; the poet wrote and answered letters, rode with Gamba, ferrying out, when the weather permitted, across the lagoon, and sometimes singing as he was ferried back after his exercise. A report of plague was followed by panic among the townspeople; the plague, however, did not appear, but rain fell, heavily and continuously so that Byron was obliged to keep to the house. He heard that the Greek Loan had been concluded, 'news,' Gamba writes, 'of the utmost importance to the safety of Greece. The great object which Lord Byron had had in view, during the time he had been in Greece, was, as I have often repeated, to make preparations for the employment of the loan to the best advantage immediately on its arrival: internal organisation, and arrangements for offensive warfare, had occupied his attention during the whole of this anxious interval; and on receipt of the intelligence, he advised Mavrocordato to send immediate information to the Government, that no time might be lost in getting ready the fleets of the different islands.'

It was not only Mavrocordato who hoped to profit. Odysseus,

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through Trelawny, his devoted admirer, and Colonel Stanhope, who was then visiting him at Athens, invited Byron and Mavrocordato to attend a conference. Byron accepted the invitation, but was delayed by floods. The weather had grown steadily more intolerable; and, at the beginning of April, the Souliots who were still in the neighbourhood, threatened Missolonghi with an armed descent. Two bands were converging on the town. One party seized a fort that commanded the harbour; while the Turkish fleet suddenly appeared on the skyline. It was obvious that Missolonghi had been betrayed, and for some hours a general massacre seemed imminent.

The crisis gave Byron new energy. Accompanied by his body-guard and his entire suite, he rode out three miles beyond the town, in order to restore the confidence of the terrified citizens. Next morning, the worst of the scare was over. He had 'suffered visibly in his health,' Gamba tells us, 'during the last day or two: the events just mentioned, and the weather, had made him more than usually nervous and irritable.' But, on the 9th, he 'received letters from Zante and from England which raised his spirits exceedingly.' There was further reassuring news of the Loan; 'but what comforted him personally was some favourable intelligence respecting his daughter and his sister. He learnt that the latter had been seriously indisposed at the very time of his fit, but had entirely recovered her health. He was delighted at this news; but he remarked the coincidence as something singular. He was, perhaps, on the whole, rather given to attach importance to such accidents; at least, he noted them as out of the common course of nature.'

Possibly it was the mood of elation these letters produced that inclined him, though the weather was very threatening and 'he had not been on horseback for three or four days,' to take his usual gallop among the olive-groves. The rain came down heavily and drenched him through. Gamba advised him to ride home; it would be courting danger, he pointed out, 'warm as he was, to remain exposed to the rain in a boat for half an hour.' But Byron ridiculed the suggestion. 'I should make a pretty soldier, indeed,' he said, 'if I were to care for such a trifle.' They dismounted and were ferried across the water, Byron mute and shivering in the stern of the craft. That evening he complained that he felt ill, and lay down on his sofa, 'restless and melancholy.'

On the 10th or the 11th, he rode out again. From that day, he did not leave the house, though neither of the two physicians was much alarmed. They assured him that he was suffering from a feverish cold; Parry, however, had decided otherwise, and, besides encouraging

him in his refusal to be bled and urging him to doctor himself with spirits—'Brandy, my Lord, Brandy,' he repeated, 'is the only thing that will save you'—persuaded him to leave Missolonghi. It had been arranged that he should go to Zante, when the sirocco burst. A sea voyage could now no longer be attempted; and, at the mercy of Dr. Millengen and Dr. Bruno—the latter having obviously lost his nerve—Byron grew weaker day by day. By the 15th he had discovered that he was very ill. That evening, Parry came to his room and sat with him, talking, until ten o'clock; 'he spoke to me about my own adventures. He spoke of death also with great composure, and though he did not believe his end was so very near, there was something about him so serious and so firm, so resigned and composed, so different from anything I had ever before seen in him, that my mind misgave me, and at times foreboded his speedy dissolution.' He spoke, too, disconnectedly, of future plans. He still meant one day to visit America, and had hopes, though they were little more than dreams, of life with his wife and daughter in the English country. 'No man on earth,' he said, 'respects a virtuous woman more than I do, and the prospect of retirement in England with my wife and Ada gives me an idea of happiness I have never experienced before. Retirement will be everything to me. . . .'

Meanwhile the fever was gaining ground. 'You have no conception,' he told Parry, 'of the unaccountable thoughts which come into my mind when the fever attacks me. I fancy myself a Jew, a Mahometan, and a Christian of every profession of faith. Eternity and space are before me. . . . ' A hurricane of wind and rain enveloped the house; upright against his pillows in that squalid room, Byron seemed cheerful, calm and affectionate. It was the last moment of complete lucidity that he was to enjoy. On the 16th, he consented to be bled; but this remedy did nothing to subdue the fever, and by the 18th his friends saw that he lay dying. It was Easter Sunday; cheerful letters arrived from England, bringing definite news of the conclusion of the Greek Loan—too late, for he had already lost consciousness.

'Your monied matters,' Hobhouse informed him, 'are going on swimmingly; you will have—indeed you have a very handsome fortune; and if you have health, I do not see what earthly advantage you can wish for that you have not got. Your present endeavour is certainly the most glorious ever undertaken by man.' So much for triumph and vindication. His friends had gathered round the bed, Fletcher, the querulous, devoted Fletcher, who had borne the brunt of Byron's nerve-storms for fifteen years, sobbing so that he was obliged to leave the room. Tita wept, but Byron had grasped his

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hand. 'O questa è una bella scena,' he murmured, half smiling, then lapsed into delirium. He imagined that he was leading some desperate storming-party; perhaps he was rehearsing the attack on Lepanto. 'Forward! Forward!' he cried, in Italian and English. 'Courage! Follow my example. . . .'

At five o'clock, however, his brain cleared. He summoned Fletcher. 'It is now nearly over,' he said. 'I must tell you all without losing a moment.'

'Shall I go, my Lord, and fetch pen, ink and paper,' Fletcher asked.

'Oh, my God! no,' Byron exclaimed, 'you will lose too much time. . . . Now pay attention!' 'His Lordship commenced,' Fletcher writes, 'by saying, "You will be provided for." I begged him . . . to proceed with things of more consequence. He then continued, "Oh, my poor dear child! My dear Ada! My God! could I but have seen her! Give her my blessing, and my dear sister Augusta and her children—and you will go to Lady Byron, and say—tell her everything—you are friends with her." His Lordship appeared to be greatly affected at this moment. Here my master's voice failed him, so that I could only catch a word at intervals; but he kept muttering something very seriously for some time, and would often raise his voice and say, "Fletcher, now if you do not execute every order which I have given you, I will torment you hereafter, if possible." Here I told his Lordship, in a state of the greatest perplexity, that I had not understood a word of what he said; to which he replied, "Oh, my God! then all is lost, for it is now too late! Can it be possible you have not understood me?" "No, my Lord," said I; "but I pray you to try and inform me once more." "How can I?" rejoined my master; "it is now too late, and all is over!" I said, "Not our will, but God's be done!" and he answered, "Yes, not mine be done—but I will try." His Lordship did indeed repeat two or three words at a time—such as "My wife! my child! my sister!—you know all—you must say all—you know my wishes!" The rest was quite unintelligible.'

He was now given a strong dose of quinine; Parry felt his hands, found them cold and tried to loosen the bandage around his head. He was in pain, muttering and grinding his teeth; after the bandage had been eased, he shed tears, then 'uttered a faint good night' and fell asleep. Now and then, he pronounced a lucid sentence—'Why was I not aware of this sooner?' . . . 'Why did I not go home before I came here?'—or murmured a name that was fixed in his memory—Augusta—Ada—Kinnaird—Hobhouse and others—as his mind laboured on to dissolution. 'I must sleep now,' were his last words.

On Monday, the 19th, his breathing grew thick. His friends still watched in the dismal room; the day had been dreary and overclouded, and, as it declined, there came a roll of distant thunder. At a quarter past six, he rapidly opened and closed his eyes. 'Oh, my God! I fear his Lordship is gone,' cried Fletcher, and the doctors hurried forward to examine his pulse. He had died—in his thirty-seventh year, the victim, as he was the author, of his own legend.

CHRONOLOGY

1788 Jan. 22nd	Born.
1801 April	Goes to Harrow.
1805 July	Leaves Harrow.
1805 October	Goes up to Cambridge.
1808 July	Leaves Cambridge.
1809 March	Publication of <i>English Bards and Scotch Reviewers</i> .
1809 July	Leaves England on Albanian Tour.
1811 July	Returns to England.
1811 August	Death of Mrs. Byron.
1812 March	Publication of <i>Childe Harold</i> , cantos I and II.
1814 April	Birth of Medora Leigh.
1815 January	Marriage.
1815 December	Birth of Ada Byron.
1816 April	Separation: leaves England.
1819 December	Leaves Venice.
1822 April	Death of Allegra.
1822 June	Death of Shelley.
1823 July	Leaves Italy for Greece.
1823 Aug.-Dec.	At Cephallonia.
1824 January	Reaches Missolonghi.
1824 April 19th	Death.

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers

[The first 264 lines]

Brougham's savage review of *Hours of Idleness* appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of January 1808. But the poet had no intention of allowing his talent to be 'snuffed out by article'; it inspired him, he remembered, to 'rage and resistance and redress: but not despondency nor despair'; and the result was his first important poem, which reflects his lifelong admiration for the genius of Alexander Pope. *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* was published anonymously more than a year after the appearance of Brougham's notice, in March 1809. The present text is based on that of the suppressed fifth edition of 1812.

A SATIRE

'I had rather be a kitten, and cry, mew!
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers,'
SHAKESPEARE

'Such shameless Bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd Critics, too.'
POPE

Still must I hear?—shall hoarse FITZGERALD¹ bawl
His creaking couplets in a tavern hall,
And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch Reviews
Should dub me scribbler, and denounce my *Muse*?
Prepare for rhyme—I'll publish, right or wrong:
Fools are my theme, let Satire be my song.

Oh! Nature's noblest gift—my grey goose-quill!
Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,
Torn from thy parent bird to form a pen,
That mighty instrument of little men!
The pen! foredoomed to aid the mental throes
Of brains that labour, big with Verse or Prose;
Though Nymphs forsake, and Critics may deride,
The Lover's solace, and the Author's pride.

¹ Nicknamed by Cobbett the 'Small-Beer Poet.' A contemporary poetaster inclined to spout his verses at convivial literary gatherings.

What Wits! what Poets dost thou daily raise!
 How frequent is thy use, how small thy praise!
 Condemned at length to be forgotten quite,
 With all the pages which 'twas thine to write.
 But thou, at least, mine own especial pen!
 Once laid aside, but now assumed again,
 Our task complete, like Hamet's shall be free;
 Though spurned by others, yet beloved by me:
 Then let us soar to-day; no common theme,
 No Eastern vision, no distempered dream
 Inspires—our path, though full of thorns, is plain;
 Smooth be the verse, and easy be the strain.

When Vice triumphant holds her sov'reign sway,
 Obeyed by all who nought beside obey;
 When Folly, frequent harbinger of crime,
 Bedecks her cap with bells of every Clime;
 When knaves and fools combined o'er all prevail,
 And weigh their Justice in a Golden Scale;
 E'en then the boldest start from public sneers,
 Afraid of Shame, unknown to other fears,
 More darkly sin, by Satire kept in awe,
 And shrink from Ridicule, though not from Law.

Such is the force of Wit! but not belong
 To me the arrows of satiric song;
 The royal vices of our age demand
 A keener weapon, and a mightier hand.
 Still there are follies, e'en for me to chase,
 And yield at least amusement in the race:
 Laugh when I laugh, I seek no other fame,
 The cry is up, and scribblers are my game:
 Speed, Pegasus!—ye strains of great and small,
 Ode! Epic! Elegy!—have at you all!
 I, too, can scrawl, and once upon a time
 I poured along the town a flood of rhyme,
 A schoolboy freak, unworthy praise or blame;
 I printed—older children do the same.
 'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print;
 A Book's a Book, altho' there's nothing in't.
 Not that a Title's sounding charm can save
 Or scrawl or scribbler from an equal grave:

This LAMB¹ must own, since his patrician name
Failed to preserve the spurious Farce from shame.
No matter, GEORGE continues still to write,
Tho' now the name is veiled from public sight.
Moved by the great example, I pursue
The self-same road, but make my own review:
Not seek great JEFFREY's,² yet like him will be
Self-constituted Judge of Poesy.

A man must serve his time to every trade
Save Censure—Critics all are ready made.
Take hackneyed jokes from MILLER, got by rote,
With just enough of learning to misquote;
A mind well skilled to find, or forge a fault;
A turn for punning—call it Attic salt;
To JEFFREY go, be silent and discreet,
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet:
Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a *sharper* hit;
Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for wit;
Care not for feeling—pass your proper jest,
And stand a Critic, hated yet caressed.

And shall we own such judgment? no—as soon
Seek roses in December—ice in June;
Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff,
Believe a woman or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that's false, before
You trust in Critics, who themselves are sore;
Or yield one single thought to be misled
By JEFFREY's heart, or LAMB's Boeotian head.
To these young tyrants, by themselves misplaced,
Combined usurpers on the Throne of Taste;
To these, when Authors bend in humble awe,
And hail their voice as Truth, their word as Law;
While these are Censors, 'twould be sin to spare;
While such are Critics, why should I forbear?
But yet, so near all modern worthies run,
'Tis doubtful whom to seek, or whom to shun;

¹ The Hon. George Lamb, son of Lady Melbourne, whose family was afterwards closely connected with the poet's life.

² Francis (afterwards Lord) Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews*.

Nor know we when to spare, or where to strike,
Our Bards and Censors are so much alike.

Then should you ask me, why I venture o'er
The path which POPE and GIFFORD trod before;
If not yet sickened, you can still proceed;
Go on; my rhyme will tell you as you read.
'But hold!' exclaims a friend,—'here's some neglect:
This—that—and t'other line seem incorrect.'
What then? the self-same blunder POPE has got,
And careless DRYDEN—'Aye, but PYE has not':—
Indeed!—'tis granted, faith!—but what care I?
Better to err with POPE, than shine with PYE.

Time was, ere yet in these degenerate days
Ignoble themes obtained mistaken praise,
When Sense and Wit with Poesy allied,
No fabled Graces, flourished side by side;
From the same fount their inspiration drew,
And, reared by Taste, bloomed fairer as they grew.
Then, in this happy Isle, a POPE's pure strain
Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought in vain;
A polished nation's praise aspired to claim,
And raised the people's, as the poet's fame.
Like him great DRYDEN poured the tide of song,
In stream less smooth, indeed, yet doubly strong.
Then CONGREVE's scenes could cheer, or OTWAY's melt;
For Nature then an English audience felt—
But why these names, or greater still, retrace,
When all to feeble Bards resign their place?
Yet to such times our lingering looks are cast,
When taste and reason with those times are past.
Now look around, and turn each trifling page,
Survey the precious works that please the age;
This truth at least let Satire's self allow,
No dearth of Bards can be complained of now.
The loaded Press beneath her labour groans,
And Printers' devils shake their weary bones;
While SOUTHEY's Epics cram the creaking shelves,
And LITTLE's Lyrics¹ shine in hot-pressed twelves.

¹ 'Little' was the pseudonym adopted by Tom Moore; at a happier period one of Byron's closest friends.

Thus saith the *Preacher*: 'Nought beneath the sun
Is new,' yet still from change to change we run.
What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!
The Cow-pox, Tractors, Galvanism, and Gas,
In turns appear, to make the vulgar stare,
Till the swoln bubble bursts—and all is air!
Nor less new schools of Poetry arise,
Where dull pretenders grapple for the prize:
O'er Taste awhile these Pseudo-bards prevail;
Each country Book-club bows the knee to Baal,
And, hurling lawful Genius from the throne,
Erects a shrine and idol of its own;
Some leaden calf—but whom it matters not,
From soaring SOUTHEY, down to grovelling STOTT.¹

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And Rhyme and Blank maintain an equal race;
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And Tales of Terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering Folly loves a varied song,
To strange, mysterious Dulness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels²—may they be the last!—
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast,
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood
Decoy young Border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why;
While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding Knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

¹ A versifier who embellished the columns of the *Morning Post*, under the name of 'Hafiz.'

² Interesting to compare this attack on Scott with the veneration expressed by Byron at a later date.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
 The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
 Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
 Not quite a Felon, yet but half a Knight,
 The gibbet or the field prepared to grace—
 A mighty mixture of the great and base.
 And think'st thou, SCOTT! by vain conceit perchance,
 On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
 Though MURRAY with his MILLER may combine
 To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
 No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
 Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
 Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
 Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
 Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
 And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain!
 Such be their meed, such still the just reward
 Of prostituted Muse and hireling bard!
 For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
 And bid a long 'good night to Marmion.'

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
 These are the Bards to whom the Muse must bow;
 While MILTON, DRYDEN, POPE, alike forgot,
 Resign their hallowed Bays to WALTER SCOTT.

The time has been, when yet the Muse was young,
 When HOMER swept the lyre, and MARO sung,
 An Epic scarce ten centuries could claim,
 While awe-struck nations hailed the magic name:
 The work of each immortal Bard appears
 The single wonder of a thousand years.
 Empires have mouldered from the face of earth,
 Tongues have expired with those who gave them birth,
 Without the glory such a strain can give,
 As even in ruin bids the language live.
 Not so with us, though minor Bards content,
 On one great work a life of labour spent:
 With eagle pinion soaring to the skies,
 Behold the Ballad-monger SOUTHEY rise!

To him let CAMOENS, MILTON, TASSO yield,
 Whose annual strains, like armies, take the field.
 First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,
 The scourge of England and the boast of France!
 Though burnt by wicked BEDFORD for a witch,
 Behold her statue placed in Glory's niche;
 Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,
 A virgin Phoenix from her ashes risen.
 Next see tremendous Thalaba¹ come on,
 Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son;
 Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
 More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
 Immortal Hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
 For ever reign—the rival of Tom Thumb!
 Since startled Metre fled before thy face,
 Well wert thou doomed the last of all thy race!
 Well might triumphant Genii bear thee hence,
 Illustrious conqueror of common sense!
 Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads his sails,
 Cacique in Mexico, and Prince in Wales;
 Tells us strange tales, as other travellers do,
 More old than Mandeville's, and not so true.
 Oh, SOUTHEY! SOUTHEY! cease thy varied song!
 A bard may chaunt too often and too long:
 As thou art strong in verse, in mercy spare!
 A fourth, alas! were more than we could bear.
 But if, in spite of all the world can say,
 Thou still wilt verseward plod thy weary way;
 If still in Berkeley-Ballads¹ most uncivil,
 Thou wilt devote old women to the devil,
 The babe unborn thy dread intent may rue:
 'God help thee,' SOUTHEY, and thy readers too.

Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
 That mild apostate from poetic rule,
 The simple WORDSWORTH, framer of a lay
 As soft as evening in his favourite May,
 Who warns his friend 'to shake off toil and trouble,
 And quit his books, for fear of growing double';

¹ *Thalaba* and Southey's other major efforts, though seldom read, are still sufficiently well known. *The Old Woman of Berkeley*, however (which describes how an aged female is carried off by the Devil), demands a note.

Who, both by precept and example, shows
 That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
 Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
 Poetic souls delight in prose insane;
 And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme
 Contain the essence of the true sublime.
 Thus, when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
 The idiot mother of 'an idiot Boy';
 A moon-struck, silly lad, who lost his way,
 And, like his bard, confounded night with day;
 So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
 And each adventure so sublimely tells,
 That all who view the 'idiot in his glory'
 Conceive the Bard the hero of the story.

Shall gentle COLERIDGE pass unnoticed here,
 To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
 Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
 Yet still Obscurity's a welcome guest.
 If Inspiration should her aid refuse
 To him who takes a Pixy for a muse,
 Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
 The bard who soars to elegize an ass:
 So well the subject suits his noble mind,
 He brays, the Laureate of the long-eared kind.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

[*Cantos I, II, III and an abridged version of Canto IV*]

Composed during the second year of Byron's Near-Eastern tour, Cantos I and II of *Childe Harold* were published, at the instigation of the poet's friend, Dallas, in the opening week of March 1812. Their success—contrary to their author's expectation, for he had been greatly discouraged by certain unfavourable criticisms he had received in Greece—was instantaneous. Then followed the years of his highest celebrity, during which he dashed off the series of Eastern Tales and one or two admirable short poems. In disgrace and exile, he once more took up the theme. Canto III appeared on November 18th, 1816; Canto IV on April 28th, 1818. There was an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos, and meanwhile an immense change had taken place both in Byron's mood and in the style through which it was expressed.

A ROMAUNT

TO IANTHE¹

Not in those climes where I have late been straying,
Though Beauty long hath there been matchless deemed,
Not in those visions to the heart displaying
Forms which it sighs but to have only dreamed,
Hath aught like thee in Truth or Fancy seemed:
Nor, having seen thee, shall I vainly seek
To paint those charms which varied as they beamed—
To such as see thee not my words were weak;
To those who gaze on thee what language could they speak?

Ah! may'st thou ever be what now thou art,
Nor unbecom the promise of thy Spring—
As fair in form, as warm yet pure in heart,
Love's image upon earth without his wing,
And guileless beyond Hope's imagining!

¹ This dedicatory poem, written during the Autumn of 1812, was added to the seventh edition, published in February 1814. It is addressed to the thirteen-year-old Lady Charlotte Harley, daughter of Lady Oxford.

And surely she who now so fondly rears
 Thy youth, in thee, thus hourly brightening,
 Beholds the Rainbow of her future years,
 Before whose heavenly hues all Sorrow disappears.

Young Peri of the West!—'tis well for me
 My years already doubly number thine;
 My loveless eye unmoved may gaze on thee,
 And safely view thy ripening beauties shine;
 Happy, I ne'er shall see them in decline;
 Happier, that, while all younger hearts shall bleed,
 Mine shall escape the doom thine eyes assign
 To those whose admiration shall succeed,
 But mixed with pangs to Love's even loveliest hours decreed.

Oh! let that eye, which, wild as the Gazelle's,
 Now brightly bold or beautifully shy,
 Wins as it wanders, dazzles where it dwells,
 Glance o'er this page, nor to my verse deny
 That smile for which my breast might vainly sigh
 Could I to thee be ever more than friend:
 This much, dear Maid, accord; nor question why
 To one so young my strain I would commend
 But bid me with my wreath one matchless Lily blend.

Such is thy name with this my verse entwined;
 And long as kinder eyes a look shall cast
 On Harold's page, Ianthe's here enshrined
 Shall thus be *first* beheld, forgotten *last*:
 My days once numbered—should this homage past
 Attract thy fairy fingers near the Lyre
 Of him who hailed thee loveliest, as thou wast—
 Such is the most my Memory may desire;
 Though more than Hope can claim, could Friendship less
 require?

CANTO THE FIRST

I

Oh, thou! in Hellas deemed of heavenly birth,
Muse! formed or fabled at the Minstrel's will!
Since shamed full oft by later lyres on earth,
Mine dares not call thee from thy sacred Hill:
Yet there I've wandered by thy vaunted rill;
Yes! sighed o'er Delphi's long deserted shrine,
Where, save that feeble fountain, all is still;
Nor mote my shell awake the weary Nine
To grace so plain a tale—this lowly lay of mine.

2

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in Virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.
Ah me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
Sore given to revel, and ungodly glee;
Few earthly things found favour in his sight
Save concubines and carnal companie,
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

3

Childe Harold was he hight:—but whence his name
And lineage long, it suits me not to say;
Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame,
And had been glorious in another day:
But one sad losel soils a name for ay,
However mighty in the olden time;
Nor all that heralds rake from confined clay,
Nor florid prose, nor honied lies of rhyme,
Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime.

4

Childe Harold basked him in the Noontide sun,
Disporting there like any other fly;
Nor deemed before his little day was done
One blast might chill him into misery.
But long ere scarce a third of his passed by,
Worse than Adversity the Childe befell;
He felt the fulness of Satiety:
Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,
Which seemed to him more lone than Eremité's sad cell.

5

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
Had sighed to many though he loved but one,¹
And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his.
Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss
Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;
Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,
And spoiled her goodly lands to gild his waste,
Nor calm domestic peace had ever deigned to taste.

6

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow Bacchanals would flee;
'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,
But Pride congealed the drop within his ee:
Apart he stalked in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
With pleasure drugged, he almost longed for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

¹ Byron here refers to Mary Chaworth, his early love, in later years a focus of sentimental reverie. She had made an unhappy marriage with the dissipated Jack Musters.

7

The Childe departed from his father's hall:
It was a vast and venerable pile;¹
So old, it seemèd only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillared in each massy aisle.
Monastic dome! condemned to uses vile!
Where Superstition once had made her den.
Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile;
And monks might deem their time was come agen,
If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.

8

Yet oft-times in his maddest mirthful mood
Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,
As if the Memory of some deadly feud
Or disappointed passion lurked below:
But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
For his was not that open, artless soul
That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow,
Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control.

9

And none did love him!—though to hall and bower
He gathered revellers from far and near,
He knew them flatterers of the festal hour,
The heartless Parasites of present cheer.
Yea! none did love him—not his lemans dear—
But pomp and power alone are Woman's care,
And where these are light Eros finds a feere;
Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where Seraphs might despair.

¹ Byron was deeply attached to Newstead, and dwelt with some complaisance both on the venerable monastic associations of the Abbey and on the revels that he himself had organized there.

10

Childe Harold had a mother—not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he did shun;
A sister whom he loved,¹ but saw her not
Before his weary pilgrimage begun:
If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel:
Ye, who have known what 'tis to dote upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal.

11

His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,
The laughing dames in whom he did delight,
Whose large blue eyes, fair locks, and snowy hands,
Might shake the Saintship of an Anchorite,
And long had fed his youthful appetite;
His goblets brimmed with every costly wine,
And all that mote to luxury invite,
Without a sigh he left, to cross the brine,
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass Earth's central line.

12

The sails were filled, and fair the light winds blew,
As glad to waft him from his native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam:
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come
One word of wail, whilst others sate and wept,
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept.

¹ Byron kept up an affectionate, though not very regular, correspondence with his half-sister, Augusta Leigh; but, till his return to England from the Near East, they were rarely able to meet.

13

But when the Sun was sinking in the sea
He seized his harp, which he at times could string,
And strike, albeit with untaught melody,
When deemed he no strange ear was listening:
And now his fingers o'er it he did fling,
And tuned his farewell in the dim twilight;
While flew the vessel on her snowy wing,
And fleeting shores receded from his sight,
Thus to the elements he poured his last 'Good Night.

CHILDE HAROLD'S GOOD NIGHT

I

'Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon Sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native Land—Good Night!

II

'A few short hours and He will rise
To give the Morrow birth;
And I shall hail the main and skies,
But not my mother Earth.
Deserted is my own good Hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall;
My Dog howls at the gate.

III

'Come hither, hither, my little page!
Why dost thou weep and wail?
Or dost thou dread the billows' rage,
Or tremble at the gale?

But dash the tear-drop from thine eye;
Our ship is swift and strong:
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along.'

IV

'Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high,
I fear not wave nor wind:
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful in mind;
For I have from my father gone,
A mother whom I love,
And have no friends, save these alone,
But thee—and One above.

V

'My father blessed me fervently,
Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again.'—
'Enough, enough, my little lad!
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry.

VI

'Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman?
Or shiver at the gale?'—
'Deem'st thou I tremble for my life?
Sir Childe, I'm not so weak;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

VII

'My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering Lake,
And when they on their father call,
What answer shall she make?'—

‘Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay;
But I, who am of lighter mood,
Will laugh to flee away.

VIII

‘For who would trust the seeming sighs
Of wife or paramour?
Fresh feeres will dry the bright blue eyes
We late saw streaming o’er.
For pleasures past I do not grieve,
Nor perils gathering near;
My greatest grief is that I leave
No thing that claims a tear.

IX

‘And now I’m in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea:
But why should I for others groan,
When none will sigh for me?
Perchance my Dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again,
He’d tear me where he stands.

X

‘With thee, my bark, I’ll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear’st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark-blue waves!
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!
My native Land—Good Night!’

I4

On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
And winds are rude in Biscay’s sleepless bay.
Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
New shores descried make every bosom gay;

And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way,
And Tagus dashing onward to the Deep,
His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap,
And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap.

15

Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land!
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!
But man would mar them with an impious hand:
And when the Almighty lifts his fiercest scourge
'Gainst those who most transgress his high command,
With treble vengeance will his hot shafts urge
Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest foeman purge.

16

What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold!
Her image floating on that noble tide,
Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold,
But now whereon a thousand keels did ride
Of mighty strength, since Albion was allied,
And to the Lusians did her aid afford:—
A nation swoln with ignorance and pride,
Who lick yet loathe the hand that waves the sword
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing Lord.

17

But whoso entereth within this town,
That, sheening far, celestial seems to be,
Disconsolate will wander up and down,
'Mid many things unsightly to strange ee;
For hut and palace show like filthily:
The dingy denizens are reared in dirt;
Ne personage of high or mean degree
Doth care for cleanness of surtout or shirt,
Though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwashed,
unhurt.

18

Poor, paltry slaves! yet born 'midst noblest scenes—
Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on such men?
Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of mount and glen.
Ah, me! what hand can pencil guide, or pen,
To follow half on which the eye dilates
Through views more dazzling unto mortal ken
Than those whereof such things the Bard relates,
Who to the awe-struck world unlocked Elysium's gates!

19

The horrid crags, by toppling convent crowned,
The cork-trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep,
The mountain-moss by scorching skies imbrowned,
The sunken glen, whose sunless shrubs must weep,
The tender azure of the unruffled deep,
The orange tints that gild the greenest bough,
The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,
The vine on high, the willow branch below,
Mixed in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow.

20

Then slowly climb the many-winding way,
And frequent turn to linger as you go,
From loftier rocks new loveliness survey,
And rest ye at 'Our Lady's house of Woe';
Where frugal monks their little relics show,
And sundry legends to the stranger tell:
Here impious men have punished been, and lo!
Deep in yon cave Honorius long did dwell,
In hope to merit Heaven by making earth a Hell.

21

And here and there, as up the crags you spring,
Mark many rude-carved crosses near the path:
Yet deem not these Devotion's offering—
These are memorials frail of murderous wrath:

For wheresoe'er the shrieking victim hath
 Poured forth his blood beneath the assassin's knife,
 Some hand erects a cross of mouldering lath;
 And grove and glen with thousand such are rife
 Throughout this purple land, where Law secures not life.

22

On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,
 Are domes where whilome kings did make repair;
 But now the wild flowers round them only breathe:
 Yet ruined Splendour still is lingering there.
 And yonder towers the Prince's palace fair:
 There thou too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,
 Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
 When wanton Wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
 Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.

23

Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of pleasure plan,
 Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow:
 But now, as if a thing unblest by Man,
 Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as Thou!
 Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
 To Halls deserted, portals gaping wide:
 Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
 Vain are the pleasaunces on earth supplied,
 Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide!

24

Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened!
 Oh! dome displeasing unto British eye!
 With diadem hight Foolscap, lo! a Fiend,
 A little Fiend that scoffs incessantly,
 There sits in parchment robe arrayed, and by
 His side is hung a seal and sable scroll,
 Where blazoned glare names known to chivalry,
 And sundry signatures adorn the roll,
 Whereat the Urchin points and laughs with all his soul.

25

Convention is the dwarfish démon styled
That foiled the knights in Marialva's dome:
Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguiled,
And turned a nation's shallow joy to gloom.
Here Folly dashed to earth the victor's plume,
And Policy regained what arms had lost:
For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels bloom!
Woe to the conquering, not the conquered host,
Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast!

26

And ever since that martial Synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra! at thy name;
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for shame.
How will Posterity the deed proclaim!
Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of their fame,
By foes in fight o'erthrown, yet victors here,
Where Scorn her finger points through many a coming year?

27

So deemed the Childe, as o'er the mountains he
Did take his way in solitary guise:
Sweet was the scene, yet soon he thought to flee,
More restless than the swallow in the skies:
Though here awhile he learned to moralise,
For Meditation fixed at times on him;
And conscious Reason whispered to despise
His early youth, misspent in maddest whim;
But as he gazed on truth his aching eyes grew dim.

28

To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever quits.
A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul:
Again he rouses from his moping fits,
But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl.

Onward he flies, nor fixed as yet the goal
Where he shall rest him on his pilgrimage;
And o'er him many changing scenes must roll
Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,
Or he shall calm his breast, or learn experience sage.

29

Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,
Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luckless queen;
And Church and Court did mingle their array,
And Mass and revel were alternate seen;
Lordlings and freres—ill-sorted fry I ween!
But here the Babylonian Whore hath built
A dome, where flaunts she in such glorious sheen,
That men forget the blood which she hath spilt,
And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to varnish guilt.

30

O'er vales that teem with fruits, romantic hills,
(Oh, that such hills upheld a freeborn race!)
Whereon to gaze the eye with joyaunce fills,
Childe Harold wends through many a pleasant place.
Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace,
Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And Life, that bloated Ease can never hope to share.

31

More bleak to view the hills at length recede,
And, less luxuriant, smother vales extend:
Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed!
Far as the eye discerns, withouten end,
Spain's realms appear whereon her shepherds tend
Flocks, whose rich fleece right well the trader knows—
Now must the Pastor's arm his *lambs* defend:
For Spain is compassed by unyielding foes,
And *all* must shield their *all*, or share Subjection's woes.

32

Where Lusitania and her Sister meet,
Deem ye what bounds the rival realms divide?
Or ere the jealous Queens of Nations greet,
Doth Tayo interpose his mighty tide?
Or dark Sierras rise in craggy pride?
Or fence of art, like China's vasty wall?
Ne barrier wall, ne river deep and wide,
Ne horrid crags, nor mountains dark and tall,
Rise like the rocks that part Hispania's land from Gaul:

33

But these between a silver streamlet glides,
And scarce a name distinguisheth the brook,
Though rival kingdoms press its verdant sides,
Here leans the idle shepherd on his crook,
And vacant on the rippling waves doth look,
That peaceful still 'twixt bitterest toemen flow;
For proud each peasant as the noblest duke:
Well doth the Spanish hind the difference know
'Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of the low.

34

But ere the mingling bounds have far been passed,
Dark Guadiana rolls his power along
In sullen billows, murmuring and vast,
So noted ancient roundelays among.
Whilome upon his banks did legions throng
Of Moor and Knight, in mailed splendour drest:
Here ceased the swiftest their race, here sunk the strong;
The Paynim turban and the Christian crest
Mixed on the bleeding stream, by floating hosts oppressed.

35

Oh, lovely Spain! renowned, romantic Land!
Where is that Standard which Pelagio bore,
When Cava's traitor-sire first called the band
That dyed thy mountain streams with Gothic gore?

Where are those bloody Banners which of yore
Waved o'er thy sons, victorious to the gale,
And drove at last the spoilers to their shore?
Red gleamed the Cross, and waned the Crescent pale,
While Afric's echoes thrilled with Moorish matrons' wail.

36

Teems not each ditty with the glorious tale?
Ah! such, alas! the hero's amplest fate!
When granite moulders and when records fail,
A peasant's plaint prolongs his dubious date.
Pride! bend thine eye from Heaven to thine estate,
See how the Mighty shrink into a song!
Can Volume, Pillar, Pile preserve thee great?
Or must thou trust Tradition's simple tongue,
When Flattery sleeps with thee, and History does thee wrong?

37

Awake, ye Sons of Spain! awake! advance!
Lo! Chivalry, your ancient Goddess, cries,
But wields not, as of old, her thirsty lance,
Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the skies:
Now on the smoke of blazing bolts she flies,
And speaks in thunder through yon engine's roar:
In every peal she calls—'Awake! arise!'—
Say, is her voice more feeble than of yore,
When her war-song was heard on Andalusia's shore?

38

Hark!—heard you not those hoofs of dreadful note?
Sounds not the clang of conflict on the heath?
Saw ye not whom the reeking sabre smote,
Nor saved your brethren ere they sank beneath
Tyrants and Tyrants' slaves?—the fires of Death,
The Bale-fires flash on high:—from rock to rock
Each volley tells that thousands cease to breathe;
Death rides upon the sulphury Siroc,
Red-Battle stamps his foot, and Nations feel the shock.

39

Lo! where the Giant on the mountain stands,
His blood-red tresses deepening in the Sun,
With death-shot glowing in his fiery hands,
And eye that scorcheth all it glares upon;
Restless it rolls, now fixed, and now anon
Flashing afar,—and at his iron feet
Destruction cowers, to mark what deeds are done;
For on this morn three potent Nations meet,
To shed before his Shrine the blood he deems most sweet.

40

By Heaven! it is a splendid sight to see
(For one who hath no friend, no brother there)
Their rival scarfs of mixed embroidery,
Their various arms that glitter in the air!
What gallant War-hounds rouse them from their lair,
And gnash their fangs, loud yelling for the prey!
All join the chase, but few the triumph share;
The Grave shall bear the chiefest prize away,
And Havoc scarce for joy can number their array.

41

Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice;
Three tongues prefer strange orisons on high;
Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies;
The shouts are France, Spain, Albion, Victory!
The Foe, the Victim, and the fond Ally
That fights for all, but ever fights in vain,
Are met—as if at home they could not die—
To feed the crow on Talavera's plain,
And fertilise the field that each pretends to gain.

42

There shall they rot—Ambition's honoured fools!
Yes, Honour decks the turf that wraps their clay!
Vain Sophistry! in these behold the tools,
The broken tools, that Tyrants cast away

By myriads, when they dare to pave their way
With human hearts—to what?—a dream alone.
Can Despots compass aught that hails their sway?
Or call with truth one span of earth their own,
Save that wherein at last they crumble bone by bone?

43

Oh, Albuera! glorious field of grief!
As o'er thy plain the Pilgrim pricked his steed,
Who could foresee thee, in a space so brief,
A scene where mingling foes should boast and bleed!
Peace to the perished! may the warrior's meed
And tears of triumph their reward prolong!
Till others fall where other chieftains lead,
Thy name shall circle round the gaping throng,
And shine in worthless lays, the theme of transient song.

44

Enough of Battle's minions! let them play
Their game of lives, and barter breath for fame:
Fame that will scarce reanimate their clay,
Though thousands fall to deck some single name.
In sooth 'twere sad to thwart their noble aim
Who strike, blest hirelings! for their country's good,
And die, that living might have proved her shame;
Perished, perchance, in some domestic feud,
Or in a narrower sphere wild Rapine's path pursued.

45

Full swiftly Harold wends his lonely way
Where proud Sevilla triumphs unsubdued:
Yet is she free? the Spoiler's wished-for prey!
Soon, soon shall Conquest's fiery foot intrude,
Blackening her lovely domes with traces rude.
Inevitable hour! 'Gainst fate to strive
Where Désolation plants her famished brood
Is vain, or Iljon, Tyre might yet survive,
And Virtue vanquish all, and Murder cease to thrive.

46

But all unconscious of the coming doom,
The feast, the song, the revel here abounds;
Strange modes of merriment the hours consume,
Nor bleed these patriots with their country's wounds:
Nor here War's clarion, but Love's rebeck sounds;
Here Folly still his votaries intralls;
And young-eyed Lewdness walks her midnight rounds:
Girt with the silent crimes of Capitals,
Still to the last kind Vice clings to the tott'ring walls.

47

Not so the rustic—with his trembling mate
He lurks, nor casts his heavy eye afar,
Lest he should view his vineyard desolate,
Blasted below the dun hot breath of War.
No more beneath soft eve's consenting star
Fandango twirls his jocund castanet:
Ah, Monarchs! could ye taste the mirth ye mar,
Not in the toils of Glory would ye fret;
The hoarse dull drum would sleep, and Man be happy yet!

48

How carols now the lusty mul'eteer?
Of Love, Romance, Devotion is his lay,
As whilome he was wont the leagues to cheer,
His quick bells wildly jingling on the way?
No! as he speeds, he chants 'Viva el Rey!'
And checks his song to execrate Godoy,
The royal wittol Charles, and curse the day
When first Spain's queen beheld the black-eyed boy,
And gore-faced Treason sprung from her adulterate joy

49

On yon long level plain, at distance crown'd
With crags, whereon those Moorish turrets rest,
Wide-scattered hoof-marks dint the wounded ground;
And, scathed by fire, the greensward's darkened vest

Tells that the foe was Andalusia's guest:
Here was the camp, the watch-flame, and the host,
Here the bold peasant stormed the Dragon's nest;
Still does he mark it with triumphant boast,
And points to yonder cliffs, which oft were won and lost.

50

And whomsoe'er along the path you meet
Bears in his cap the badge of crimson hue,
Which tells you whom to shun and whom to greet:
Woe to the man that walks in public view
Without of loyalty this token true:
Sharp is the knife, and sudden is the stroke;
And sorely would the Gallic foeman rue,
If subtle poniards, wrapt beneath the cloke
Could blunt the sabre's edge, or clear the cannon's smoke.

51

At every turn Morena's dusky height
Sustains aloft the battery's iron load;
And, far as mortal eye can compass sight,
The mountain-howitzer, the broken road,
The bristling palisade, the fosse o'erflowed,
The stationed bands, the never-vacant watch,
The magazine in rocky durance stowed,
The holstered steed beneath the shed of thatch,
The ball-piled pyramid, the ever-blazing match

52

Portend the deeds to come:—but he whose nod
Has tumbled feeble despots from their sway,
A moment pauseth ere he lifts the rod;
A little moment deigneth to delay:
Soon will his legions sweep through these their way;
The West must own the Scourger of the world.
Ah! Spain! how sad will be thy reckoning-day,
When soars Gaul's Vulture, with his wings unfurled,
And thou shalt view thy sons in crowds to Hades hurled.

53

And must they fall? the young, the proud, the brave,
To swell one bloated Chief's unwholesome reign?
No step between submission and a grave?
The rise of Rapine and the fall of Spain?
And doth the Power that man adores ordain
Their doom, nor heed the suppliant's appeal?
Is all that desperate Valour acts in vain?
And Counsel sage, and patriotic Zeal—
The Veteran's skill—Youth's fire—and Manhood's heart of
steel?

54

Is it for this the Spanish maid, aroused,
Hangs on the willow her unstrung guitar,
And, all unsexed, the Anlace hath espoused,
Sung the loud song, and dared the deed of war?
And she, whom once the semblance of a scar
Appalled, an owl's 'larum chilled with dread,
Now views the column-scattering bay'net jar,
The falchion flash, and o'er the yet warm dead
Stalks with Minerva's step where Mars might quake to tread.

55

Ye who shall marvel when you hear her tale,
Oh! had you known her in her softer hour,
Marked her black eye that mocks her coal-black veil,
Heard her light, lively tones in Lady's bower,
Seen her long locks that foil the painter's power,
Her fairy form, with more than female grace,
Scarce would you deem that Saragoza's tower
Beheld her smile in Danger's Gorgon face,
Thin the closed ranks, and lead in Glory's fearful chase.

56

Her lover sinks—she sheds no ill-timed tear;
Her Chief is slain—she fills his fatal post;
Her fellows flee—she checks their base career;
The Foe retires—she heads the sallying host:

Who can appease like her a lover's ghost?
Who can avenge so well a leader's fall?
What maid retrieve when man's flushed hope is lost?
Who hang so fiercely on the flying Gaul,
Foiled by a woman's hand, before a battered wall?

57

Yet are Spain's maids no race of Amazons,
But formed for all the witching arts of love:
Though thus in arms they emulate her sons,
And in the horrid phalanx dare to move,
'Tis but the tender fierceness of the dove,
Pecking the hand that hovers o'er her mate:
In softness as in firmness far above
Remoter females, famed for sickening prate;
Her mind is nobler sure, her charms perchance as great.

58

The seal Love's dimpling finger hath impressed
Denotes how soft that chin which bears his touch:
Her lips, whose kisses pout to leave their nest
Bid man be valiant ere he merit such:
Her glance how wildly beautiful! how much
Hath Phoebus wooed in vain to spoil her cheek
Which glows yet smoother from his amorous clutch!
Who round the North for paler dames would seek?
How poor their forms appear! how languid, wan, and weak!

59

Match me, ye climes! which poets love to laud;
Match me, ye harems of the land! where now
I strike my strain, far distant, to applaud
Beauties that ev'n a cynic must avow;
Match me those Houries, whom ye scarce allow
To taste the gale lest Love should ride the wind,
With Spain's dark-glancing daughters—deign to know
There your wise Prophet's Paradise we find,
His black-eyed maids of Heaven, angelically kind.

60

Oh, thou Parnassus! whom I now survey,
Not in the phrensy of a dreamer's eye,
Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky,
In the wild pomp of mountain-majesty!
What marvel if I thus essay to sing?
The humblest of thy pilgrims passing by
Would gladly woo thine Echoes with his string,
Though from thy heights no more one Muse will wave her
wing.

61

Oft have I dreamed of Thee! whose glorious name
Who knows not, knows not man's divinest lore:
And now I view thee—'tis, alas! with shame
That I in feeblest accents must adore.
When I recount thy worshippers of yore
I tremble, and can only bend the knee;
Nor raise my voice, nor vainly dare to soar,
But gaze beneath thy cloudy canopy
In silent joy to think at last I look on Thee!

62

Happier in this than mightiest Bards have been,
Whose Fate to distant homes confined their lot,
Shall I unmoved behold the hallowed scene,
Which others rave of, though they know it not?
Though here no more Apollo haunts his Grot,
And thou, the Muses' seat, art now their grave,
Some gentle Spirit still pervades the spot,
Sighs in the gale, keeps silence in the Cave,
And glides with glassy foot o'er yon melodious wave.

63

Of thee hereafter. Ev'n amidst my strain
I turned aside to pay my homage here;
Forgot the land, the sons; the maids of Spain;
Her fate, to every freeborn bosom dear;

And hailed thee, not perchance without a tear.
Now to my theme—but from thy holy haunt
Let me some remnant, some memorial bear;
Yield me one leaf of Daphne's deathless plant,
Nor let thy votary's hope be deemed an idle vaunt.

64

But ne'er didst thou, fair Mount! when Greece was young,
See round thy giant base a brighter choir,
Nor e'er did Delphi, when her Priestess sung
The Pythian hymn with more than mortal fire,
Behold a train more fitting to inspire
The song of love, than Andalusia's maids
Nurst in the glowing lap of soft Desire:
Ah! that to these were given such peaceful shades
As Greece can still bestow, though Glory fly her glades.

65

Fair is proud Seville; let her country boast
Her strength, her wealth, her site of ancient days;
But Cadiz, rising on the distant coast,
Calls forth a sweeter, though ignoble praise.
Ah, Vice! how soft are thy voluptuous ways!
While boyish blood is mantling, who can 'scape
The fascination of thy magic gaze?
A Cherub-Hydra round us dost thou gape,
And mould to every taste thy dear delusive shape.

66

When Paphos fell by Time—accursèd Time!
The Queen who conquers all must yield to thee—
The Pleasures fled, but sought as warm a clime;
And Venus, constant to her native Sea,
To nought else constant, hither deigned to flee,
And fixed her shrine within these walls of white:
Though not to one dome circumscribeth She
Her worship, but, devoted to her rite,
A thousand Altars rise, for ever blazing bright.

67

From morn till night, from night till startled Morn
Peeps blushing on the Revel's laughing crew,
The Song is heard, the rosy Garland worn;
Devices quaint and Frolics ever new,
Tread on each other's kibes. A long adieu
He bids to sober joy that here sojourns:
Nought interrupts the riot, though in lieu
Of true devotion monkish incense burns,
And Love and Prayer unite, or rule the hour by turns.

68

The Sabbath comes, a day of blessèd rest:
What hallows it upon this Christian shore?
Lo! it is sacred to a solemn Feast:
Hark! heard you not the forest-monarch's roar?
Crashing the lance, he snuffs the spouting gore
Of man and steed, o'erthrown beneath his horn;
The thronged arena shakes with shouts for more;
Yells the mad crowd o'er entrails freshly torn,
Nor shrinks the female eye, nor ev'n affects to mourn

69

The seventh day this—the Jubilee of man!
London! right well thou know'st the day of prayer:
Then thy spruce citizen, washed artisan,
And smug apprentice gulp their weekly air:
Thy coach of hackney, whiskey, one-horse chair,
And humblest gig through sundry suburbs whirl,
To Hampstead, Brentford, Harrow make repair;
Till the tired jade the wheel forgets to hurl,
Provoking envious gibe from each pedestrian churl.

70

Some o'er thy Thamis row the ribboned fair,
Others along the safer turnpike fly;
Some Richmond-hill ascend, some scud to Ware,
And many to the steep of Highgate hie.

Ask ye, Boeotian Shades! the reason why?
'Tis to the worship of the solemn Horn,
Grasped in the holy hand of Mystery,
In whose dread name both men and maids are sworn,
And consecrate the oath with draught, and dance till morn.

71

All have their fooleries—not alike are thine,
Fair Cadiz, rising o'er the dark blue sea!
Soon as the *Matin* bell proclaimeth nine,
Thy Saint-adorers count the Rosary:
Much is the *VIRGIN* teased to shrive them free
(Well do I ween the only virgin there)
From crimes as numerous as her beadsmen be;
Then to the crowded circus forth they fare:
Young, old, high, low, at once the same diversion share.

72

The lists are oped, the spacious area cleared,
Thousands on thousands piled are seated round;
Long ere the first loud trumpet's note is heard,
No vacant space for lated wight is found:
Here Dons, Grandees, but chiefly Dames abound,
Skilled in the ogle of a roguish eye,
Yet ever well inclined to heal the wound;
None through their cold disdain are doomed to die,
As moon-struck bards complain, by Love's sad archery.

73

Hushed is the din of tongues—on gallant steeds,
With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light-poised lance,
Four cavaliers prepare for venturous deeds
And lowly-bending to the lists advance;
Rich are their scarfs, their chargers featly prance:
If in the dangerous game they shine to-day,
The crowd's loud shout and ladies' lovely glance,
Best prize of better acts! they bear away;
And all that kings or chiefs e'er gain their toils repay.

74

In costly sheen and gaudy cloak arrayed,
But all afoot, the light-limbed Matadore
Stands in the centre, eager to invade
The lord of lowing herds; but not before
The ground, with cautious tread, is traversed o'er,
Lest aught unseen should lurk to thwart his speed:
His arms a dart, he fights aloof, nor more
Can Man achieve without the friendly steed—
Alas! too oft condemned for him to bear and bleed.

75

Thrice sounds the Clarion; lo! the signal falls,
The den expands, and Expectation mute
Gapes round the silent circle's peopled walls:
Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute,
And, wildly staring, spurns, with sounding foot,
The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:
Here, there, he points his threatening front, to suit
His first attack, wide-waving to and fro
His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated glow.

76

Sudden he stops—his eye is fixed—away—
Away, thou heedless boy! prepare the spear;
Now is thy time, to perish, or display
The skill that yet may check his mad career!
With well-timed croupe the nimble coursers veer;
On foams the Bull, but not unscathed he goes;
Streams from his flank the crimson torrent clear:
He flies, he wheels, distracted with his throes;
Dart follows dart—lance, lance—loud bellowings speak his
woes.

77

Again he comes; nor dart nor lance avail,
Nor the wild plunging of the tortured horse;
Though Man and Man's avenging arms assail,
Vain are his weapons, vainer is his force.

One gallant steed is stretched a mangled corse;
Another, hideous sight! unseamed appears,
His gory chest unveils life's panting source;
Though death-struck, still his feeble frame he rears;
Staggering, but stemming all, his Lord unharmed he bears.

78

Foiled, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last
Full in the centre stands the Bull at bay,
'Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast
And foes disabled in the brutal fray:
And now the Matadores around him play,
Shake the red cloak, and poise the ready brand:
Once more through all he bursts his thundering way—
Vain rage! the mantle quits the conynge hand,
Wraps his fierce eye—'tis past—he sinks upon the sand!

79

Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,
Sheathed in his form the deadly weapon lies.
He stops—he starts—disdaining to decline:
Slowly he falls, amidst triumphant cries,
Without a groan, without a struggle dies.
The decorated car appears—on high
The corse is piled—sweet sight for vulgar eyes—
Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift as shy,
Hurl the dark bulk along, scarce seen in dashing by.

80

Such the ungentle sport that oft invites
The Spanish maid, and cheers the Spanish swain.
Nurtured in blood betimes, his heart delights
In vengeance, gloating on another's pain.
What private feuds the troubled village stain!
Though now one phalanxed host should meet the foe,
Enough, alas! in humble homes remain,
To meditate 'gainst friend the secret blow,
For some slight cause of wrath; whence Life's warm stream
must flow.

81

But Jealousy has fled: his bars, his bolts,
His withered Centinel, Duenna sage!
And all whereat the generous soul revolts,
Which the stern dotard deemed he could encage,
Have passed to darkness with the vanished age.
Who late so free as Spanish girls were seen,
(Ere War arose in his volcanic rage,)
With braided tresses bounding o'er the green,
While on the gay dance shone Night's lover-loving Queen?

82

Oh! many a time and oft, had Harold loved,
Or dreamed he loved, since Rapture is a dream;
But now his wayward bosom was unmoved,
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream;
And lately had he learned with truth to deem
Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:
How fair, how young, how soft soe'er he seem,
Full from the fount of Joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings.

83.

Yet to the beauteous form he was not blind,
Though now it moved him as it moves the wise;
Not that Philosophy on such a mind
E'er deigned to bend her chastely-awful eyes:
But Passion raves herself to rest, or flies;
And Vice, that digs her own voluptuous tomb,
Had buried long his hopes, no more to rise:
Pleasure's palled Victim! life-abhorring Gloom
Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain's unresting doom.

84

Still he beheld, nor mingled with the throng;
But viewed them not with misanthropic hate:
Fain would he now have joined the dance, the song;
But who may smile that sinks beneath his fate?

Nought that he saw his sadness could abate:
Yet once he struggled 'gainst the Demon's sway,
And as in Beauty's bower he pensive sate,
Poured forth his unpremeditated lay,
To charms as fair as those that soothed his happier day.

TO INEZ

I

Nay, smile not at my sullen brow;
Alas! I cannot smile again:
Yet Heaven avert that ever thou
Shouldst weep, and haply weep in vain.

II

And dost thou ask what secret woe
I bear, corroding Joy and Youth?
And wilt thou vainly seek to know
A pang, ev'n thou must fail to soothe?

III

It is not love, it is not hate,
Nor low Ambition's honours lost,
That bids me loathe my present state,
And fly from all I prized the most:

IV

It is that weariness which springs
From all I meet, or hear, or see:
To me no pleasure Beauty brings;
Thine eyes have scarce a charm for me.

V

It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
That fabled Hebrew Wanderer bore;
That will not look beyond the tomb,
But cannot hope for rest before.

VI

What Exile from himself can flee?
To zones though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
The blight of Life—the Demon Thought.

VII

Yet others rapt in pleasure seem,
And taste of all that I forsake;
Oh! may they still of transport dream,
And ne'er—at least like me—awake!

VIII

Through many a clime 'tis mine to go,
With many a retrospection curst;
And all my solace is to know,
Whate'er betides, I've known the worst.

IX

What is that worst? Nay do not ask—
In pity from the search forbear:
Smile on—nor venture to unmask
Man's heart, and view the Hell that's there.

85

Adieu, fair Cadiz! yea, a long adieu!
Who may forget how well thy walls have stood?
When all were changing thou alone wert true,
First to be free and last to be subdued:
And if amidst a scene, a shock so rude,
Some native blood was seen thy streets to dye,
A Traitor only fell beneath the feud:
Here all were noble, save Nobility;
None hugged a Conqueror's chain, save fallen Chivalry!

86

Such be the sons of Spain, and strange her Fate!
They fight for Freedom who were never free,
A Kingless people for a nerveless state;
Her vassals combat when their Chieftains flee,
True to the veriest slaves of Treachery:
Fond of a land which gave them nought but life,
Pride points the path that leads to Liberty;
Back to the struggle, baffled in the strife,
War, war is still the cry, 'War even to the knife!'

87

Ye, who would more of Spain and Spaniards know
Go, read whate'er is writ of bloodiest strife:
Whate'er keen Vengeance urged on foreign foe
Can act, is acting there against man's life:
From flashing scimitar to secret knife,
War mouldeth there each weapon to his need—
So may he guard the sister and the wife,
So may he make each curst oppressor bleed—
So may such foes deserve the most remorseless deed!

88

Flows there a tear of Pity for the dead?
Look o'er the ravage of the reeking plain;
Look on the hands with female slaughter red;
Then to the dogs resign the unburied slain,
Then to the vulture let each corse remain,
Albeit unworthy of the prey-bird's maw;
Let their bleached bones, and blood's unbleaching stain,
Long mark the battle-field with hideous awe:
Thus only may our sons conceive the scenes we saw!

89

Nor yet, alas! the dreadful work is done;
Fresh legions pour adown the Pyrenees:
It deepens still, the work is scarce begun,
Nor mortal eye the distant end foresees.

Fall'n nations gaze on Spain; if freed, she frees
More than her fell Pizarros once enchained:
Strange retribution! now Columbia's case
Repairs the wrongs that Quito's sons sustained,
While o'er the parent clime prowls Murder unrestrained.

90

Not all the blood at Talavera shed,
Not all the marvels of Barossa's fight,
Not Albuera lavish of the dead,
Have won for Spain her well asserted right.
When shall her Olive-Branch be free from blight?
When shall she breathe her from the blushing toil?
How many a doubtful day shall sink in night,
Ere the Frank robber turn him from his spoil,
And Freedom's stranger-tree grow native of the soil!

91

And thou, my friend!¹—since unavailing woe
Bursts from my heart, and mingles with the strain—
Had the sword laid thee with the mighty low,
Pride might forbid e'en Friendship to complain:
But thus unlaurelled to descend in vain,
By all forgotten, save the lonely breast,
And mix unbleeding with the boasted slain,
While Glory crowns so many a meaner crest!
What hadst thou done to sink so peacefully to rest?

92

Oh, known the earliest, and esteemed the most!
Dear to a heart where nought was left so dear!
Though to my hopeless days for ever lost,
In dreams deny me not to see thee here!
And Morn in secret shall renew the tear
Of Consciousness awaking to her woes,
And Fancy hover o'er thy bloodless bier,

¹ John Wingfield had died in Portugal of a fever on May 14th, 1811. His memory belonged to what Byron afterwards described as the happiest and most untroubled period of his life—his days at Harrow.

Till my frail frame return to whence it rose,
And mourned and mourner lie united in repose.

93

Here is one fytte of Harold's pilgrimage:
Ye who of him may further seek to know,
Shall find some tidings in a future page,
If he that rhymeth now may scribble moe.
Is this too much? stern Critic! say not so:
Patience! and ye shall hear what he beheld
In other lands, where he was doomed to go:
Lands that contain the monuments of Eld,
Ere Greece and Grecian arts by barbarous hands were
quelled.

CANTO THE SECOND

I

Come, blue-eyed Maid of Heaven!—but Thou, alas!
Didst never yet one mortal song inspire—
Goddess of Wisdom! here thy temple was,
And is, despite of War and wasting fire,
And years, that bade thy worship to expire:
But worse than steel, and flame, and ages slow,
Is the dread sceptre and dominion dire
Of men who never felt the sacred glow
That thoughts of thee and thine on polished breasts
bestow.

2

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone—glimmering through the dream of things that were:
First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
They won, and passed away—is this the whole?
A schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The Warrior's weapon and the Sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, gray flits the shade of power.

3

Son of the Morning, rise! approach you here!
Come—but molest not yon defenceless Urn:
Look on this spot—a Nation's sepulchre!
Abode of Gods, whose shrines no longer burn.
Even Gods must yield—Religions take their turn:
'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's—and other Creeds
Will rise with other years, till Man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on
reeds.

4

Bound to the Earth, he lifts his eye to Heaven—
Is 't not enough, Unhappy Thing! to know
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,
That being, thou would'st be again, and go,
Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so
On Earth no more, but mingled with the skies?
Still wilt thou dream on future Joy and Woe?
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies:
That little urn saith more than thousand Homilies.

5

Or burst the vanished Hero's lofty mound;
Far on the solitary shore he sleeps:
He fell, and falling nations mourned around;
But now not one of saddening thousands weeps,
Nor warlike worshipper his vigil keeps
Where demi-gods appeared, as records tell.
Remove yon skull from out the scattered heaps:
Is that a Temple where a God may dwell?
Why ev'n the Worm at last disdains her shattered cell!

6

Look on its broken arch, its ruined wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
The Dome of Thought, the Palace of the Soul:
Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit
And Passion's host, that never brooked control:
Can all Saint, Sage, or Sophist ever writ,
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?

7

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!
'All that we know is, nothing can be known.'
Why should we shrink from what we cannot shun?
Each hath its pang, but feeble sufferers groan!

With brain-born dreams of Evil all their own.
Pursue what Chance or Fate proclaimeth best—
Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
There no forced banquet claims the sated guest,
But Silence spreads the couch of ever welcome Rest.

8

Yet if, as holiest men have deemed, there be
A land of Souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the Doctrine of the Sadducee
And Sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice we feared to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade revealed to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the Right!

9

There, Thou!—whose Love and Life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain—
Twined with my heart, and can I deem thee dead
When busy Memory flashes on my brain?
Well—I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may Futurity's behest,
For me 'twere bliss enough to know thy spirit blest!

10

Here let me sit upon this massy stone
The marble column's yet unshaken base;
Here, son of Saturn! was thy favourite throne:
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me trace
The latent grandeur of thy dwelling-place.
It may not be: nor ev'n can Fancy's eye
Restore what Time hath laboured to deface:
Yet these proud Pillars claim no passing sigh;
Unmoved the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by.

II

But who, of all the plunderers of yon Fane¹
On high—where Pallas lingered, loth to flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign—
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could be!
England! I joy no child he was of thine:
Thy free-born men should spare what once was free;
Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,
And bear these altars o'er the long-reluctant brine.

I2

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spared:
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,
His mind as barren and his heart as hard,
Is he whose head conceived, whose hand prepared,
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:
Her Sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their Mother's pains,
And never knew, till then, the weight of Despot's chains.

I3

What! shall it e'er be said by British tongue,
Albion was happy in Athena's tears?
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;
The Ocean Queen, the free Britannia, bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:
Yes, she, whose generous aid her name endears,
Tore down those remnants with a Harpy's hand,
Which envious Eld forbore, and tyrants left to stand.

I4

Where was thine Ægis, Pallas! that appalled
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way?

¹ Byron was no great lover of antiquity; but he felt the keenest resentment at Lord Elgin's spoliation of the Parthenon marbles.

Where Peleus' son? whom Hell in vain enthralled,
His shade from Hades upon that dread day
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What! could not Pluto spare the Chief once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wandered on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserved the walls he loved to shield before.

15

Cold is the heart, fair Greece! that looks on Thee,
Nor feels as Lovers o'er the dust they loved;
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed
By British hands, which it had best behoved
To guard those relics ne'er to be restored:—
Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
And snatched thy shrinking Gods to Northern climes
abhorred!

16

But where is Harold? shall I then forget
To urge the gloomy Wanderer o'er the wave?
Little recked he of all that Men regret;
No loved-one now in feigned lament could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended gave,
Ere the cold Stranger passed to other climes:
Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave;
But Harold felt not as in other times,
And left without a sigh the land of War and Crimes.

17

He that has sailed upon the dark blue sea
Has viewed at times, I ween, a full fair sight,
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,
The white sail set, the gallant Frigate tight—
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,
The glorious Main expanding o'er the bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
The dullest sailer wearing bravely now—
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

18

And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy,
The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
When, at a word, the tops are manned on high:
Hark, to the Boatswain's call, the cheering cry!
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides;
Or schoolboy Midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful Urchin guides.

19

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,
Where on the watch the staid Lieutenant walks:
Look on that part which sacred doth remain
For the lone Chieftain, who majestic stalks
Silent and feared by all—not oft he talks
With aught beneath him, if he would preserve
That strict restraint, which broken, ever balks
Conquest and Fame: But Britons rarely swerve
From law, however stern, which tends their strength to
nerve.

20

Blow! swiftly blow, thou keel-compelling gale!
Till the broad Sun withdraws his lessening ray;
Then must the Pennant-bearer slacken sail,
That lagging barks may make their lazy way.
Ah! grievance sore, and listless dull delay,
To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest breeze!
What leagues are lost, before the dawn of day,
Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,
The flapping sail hauled down to halt for logs like these!

21

The Moon is up; by Heaven, a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!

Meantime some rude Arion's restless hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love;
A circle there of merry listeners stand
Or to some well-known measure fealty move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

22

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
Lands of the dark-eyed Maid and dusky Moor
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:
How softly on the Spanish shore she plays!
Disclosing rock, and slope, and forest brown,
Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase;
But Mauritania's giant-shadows frown,
From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.

23

'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have loved, though Love is at an end:
The Heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

24

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,
To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere,
The Soul forgets her schemes of Hope and Pride,
And flies unconscious o'er each backward year;
None are so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possessed
A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;
A flashing pang! of which the weary breast
Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

25

To sit on rocks—to muse o'er flood and fell—
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not Man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not Solitude—'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores
unrolled.

26

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the World's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of Splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less,
Of all that flattered—followed—sought, and sued;
This is to be alone—This, This is Solitude!

27

More blest the life of godly Eremite,
Such as on lonely Athos may be seen,
Watching at eve upon the Giant Height,
Which looks o'er waves so blue, skies so serene,
That he who there at such an hour hath been
Will wistful linger on that hallowed spot;
Then slowly tear him from the 'witching scene,
Sigh forth one wish that such had been his lot,
Then turn to hate a world he had almost forgot.

28

Pass we the long unvarying course, the track
Of trod, that never leaves a trace behind;
Pass we the calm—the gale—the change—the tack,
And each well known caprice of wave and wind;

Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Cooped in their wingèd sea-girt citadel;
The foul—the fair—the contrary—the kind—
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn—lo, Land! and All is well!

29

But not in silence pass Calypso's isles,
The sister tenants of the middle deep;
There for the weary still a Haven smiles,
Though the fair Goddess long hath ceased to weep,
And o'er her cliffs a fruitless watch to keep
For him who dared prefer a mortal bride:
Here, too, his boy essayed the dreadful leap
Stern Mentor urged from high to yonder tide;
While thus of both bereft, the Nymph-Queen doubly
sighed.

30

Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone:
But trust not this; too easy Youth, beware!
A mortal Sovereign holds her dangerous throne,
And thou may'st find a new Calypso there.
Sweet Florence!¹ could another ever share
This wayward, loveless heart, it would be thine:
But checked by every tie, I may not dare
To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,
Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang for *mine*.

31

Thus Harold deemed, as on that Lady's eye
He looked, and met its beam without a thought,
Save Admiration glancing harmless by:
Love kept aloof, albeit not far remote,
Who knew his Votary often lost and caught,
But knew him as his Worshipper no more,
And ne'er again the Boy his bosom sought:

¹ Mrs. Spencer Smith was the heroine of a somewhat inconclusive love affair in which Byron became involved during his stay in Malta.

Since now he vainly urged him to adore,
Well deemed the little God his ancient sway was o'er.

32

Fair Florence found, in sooth with some amaz,
One who, 'twas said, still sighed to all he saw,
Withstand, unmoved, the lustre of her gaze,
Which others hailed with real or mimic awe,
Their hope, their doom, their punishment, their law;
All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen claims:
And much she marvelled that a youth so raw
Nor felt, nor feigned at least, the oft-told flames,
Which, though sometimes they frown, yet rarely anger
dames.

33

Little knew she that seeming marble heart,
Now masked in silence or withheld by Pride,
Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art,
And spread its snares licentious far and wide;
Nor from the base pursuit had turned aside,
As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
But Harold on such arts no more relied;
And had he doted on those eyes so blue,
Yet never would he join the lovers' whining crew.

34

Not much he kens, I ween, of Woman's breast,
Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs;
What careth she for hearts when once possessed?
Do proper homage to thine Idol's eyes,
But not too humbly—or she will despise
Thee and thy suit, though told in moving tropes:
Disguise ev'n tenderness, if thou art wise;
Brisk Confidence still best with woman copes:
Pique her and soothe in turn—soon Passion crowns thy
hopes.

35

'Tis an old lesson—Time approves it true,
And those who know it best, deplore it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost:
Youth wasted—Minds degraded—Honour lost—
These are thy fruits, successful Passion! these!
If, kindly cruel, early Hope is crost,
Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
Not to be cured when Love itself forgets to please.

36

Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
For we have many a mountain-path to tread,
And many a varied shore to sail along,
By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction, led—
Climes, fair withal as ever mortal head
Imagined in its little schemes of thought,
Or e'er in new Utopias were ared,
To teach Man what he might be, or he ought—
If that corrupted thing could ever such be taught.

37

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still!
Though always changing, in her aspect mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never-weaned, though not her favoured child.
Oh! she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polished dares pollute her path:
To me by day or night she ever smiled,
Though I have marked her when none other hath,
And sought her more and more, and loved her best in wrath.

38

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his namesake, whose oft-baffled foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprise:

Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged Nurse of savage men!
The Cross descends, thy Minarets arise,
And the pale Crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress-grove within each city's ken.

39

Childe Harold sailed, and passed the barren spot,
Where sad Penelope o'erlooked the wave;
And onward viewed the mount, not yet forgot,
The Lover's refuge, and the Lesbian's grave.
Dark Sappho! could not Verse immortal save
That breast imbued with such immortal fire?
Could she not live who life eternal gave?
If life eternal may await the lyre,
That only Heaven to which Earth's children may aspire.

40

'Twas on a Grecian autumn's gentle eve
Childe Harold hailed Leucadia's cape afar;
A spot he longed to see, nor cared to leave:
Oft did he mark the scenes of vanished war,
Actium—Lepanto—fatal Trafalgar;
Mark them unmoved, for he would not delight
(Born beneath some remote inglorious star)
In themes of bloody fray, or gallant fight,
But loathed the bravo's trade, and laughed at martial wight.

41

But when he saw the Evening star above
Leucadia's far-projecting rock of woe,
And hailed the last resort of fruitless love,
He felt, or deemed he felt, no common glow:
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient mount,
He watched the billows' melancholy flow,
And, sunk albeit in thought as he was wont,
More placid seemed his eye, and smooth his pallid front.

42

Morn dawns; and with it stern Albania's hills,
Dark Suli's rocks, and Pindus' inland peak,
Robed half in mist, bedewed with snowy rills,
Arrayed in many a dun and purple streak,
Arise; and, as the clouds along them break,
Disclose the dwellings of the mountaineer:
Here roams the wolf—the eagle whets his beak—
Birds—beasts of prey—and wilder men appear,
And gathering storms around convulse the closing year.

43

Now Harold felt himself at length alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu;
Now he adventured on a shore unknown,
Which all admire, but many dread to view:
His breast was armed 'gainst fate, his wants were few;
Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrank to meet:
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet,
Beat back keen Winter's blast, and welcomed Summer's
 heat.

44

Here the red Cross, for still the Cross is here,
Though sadly scoffed at by the circumcised,
Forgets that Pride to pampered priesthood dear,—
Churchman and Votary alike despised.
Foul Superstition! howsoe'er disguised,
Idol—Saint—Virgin—Prophet—Crescent—Cross—
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true Worship's gold can separate thy dross?

45

Ambracia's gulf behold, where once was lost
A world for Woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian King

To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter bring:
Look where the second Cæsar's trophies rose!
Now, like the hands that reared them, withering:
Imperial Anarchs, doubling human woes!
God! was thy globe ordained for such to win and lose?

46

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,
Ev'n to the centre of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold passed o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce noticed in historic tales:
Yet in famed Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; loved Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

47

He passed bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake,
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his further journey take
To greet Albania's Chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield, unless to gold.

48

Monastic Zitzal from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favoured spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze—around—above—below,—
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole:
Beneath, the distant Torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed Cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.

49

Amidst the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,
Which, were it not for many a mountain nigh
Rising in lofty ranks and loftier still,
Might well itself be deemed of dignity,
The Convent's white walls glisten fair on high:
Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer; the passer by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

50

Here in the sultriest season let him rest,
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From Heaven itself he may inhale the breeze:
The plain is far beneath—oh! let him seize
Pure pleasure while he can; the scorching ray
Here pierceth not, impregnate with disease:
Then let his length the loitering pilgrim lay,
And gaze, untired, the Morn—the Noon—the Eve away.

51

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic Amphitheatre,
Chimæra's Alps extend from left to right:
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir;
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow—the mountain-fir
Nodding above; behold black Acheron!
Once consecrated to the sepulchre.
Pluto! if this be Hell I look upon,
Close shamed Elysium's gates—my shade shall seek for none.

52

Ne city's towers pollute the lovely view;
Unseen is Yanina, though not remote,
Veiled by the screen of hills: here men are few,
Scenty the hamlet, rare the lonely cot:

But, peering down each precipice, the goat
Browseth; and, pensive o'er his scattered flock,
The little shepherd in his white capote
Doth lean his boyish form along the rock,
Or in his cave awaits the Tempest's short-lived shock.

53

Oh! where, Dodona! is thine agèd Grove,
Prophetic Fount, and Oracle divine?
What valley echoed the response of Jove?
What trace remaineth of the Thunderer's shrine?
All, all forgotten—and shall Man repine
That his frail bonds to fleeting life are broke?
Cease, Fool! the fate of Gods may well be thine:
Wouldst thou survive the marble or the oak?
When nations, tongues, and worlds must sink beneath the
stroke!

54

Epirus' bounds recede, and mountains fail;
Tired of up-gazing still, the wearied eye
Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale
As ever Spring yclad in glassy dye:
Ev'n on a plain no humble beauties lie,
Where some bold river breaks the long expanse,
And woods along the banks are waving high,
Whose shadows in the glassy waters dance,
Or with the moonbeam sleep in Midnight's solemn trance.

55

The Sun had sunk behind vast Tomerit,
And Laos wide and fierce came roaring by;
The shades of wonted night were gathering yet,
When, down the steep banks winding warily,
Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the sky,
The glittering minarets of Tepalen,
Whose walls o'erlook the stream; and drawing nigh,
He heard the busy hum of warrior-men
Swelling the breeze that sighed along the lengthening glen.

56

He passed the sacred Haram's silent tower,
And underneath the wide o'erarching gate
Surveyed the dwelling of this Chief of power,
Where all around proclaimed his high estate.
Amidst no common pomp the Despot sate,
While busy preparation shook the court,
Slaves, eunuchs, soldiers, guests, and santons wait:—
Within, a palace, and without, a fort—
Here men of every clime appear to make resort.

57

Richly caparisoned, a ready row
Of armèd horse, and many a warlike store,
Circled the wide-extending court below;
Above, strange groups adorned the corridore;
And oft-times through the area's echoing door
Some high-capped Tartar spurred his steed away:
The Turk—the Greek—the Albanian—and the Moor,
Here mingled in their many-hued array,
While the deep war-drum's sound announced the close of day.

58

The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee,
With shawl-girt head and ornamented gun,
And gold-embroidered garments, fair to see;
The crimson-scarfèd men of Macedon;
The Delhi with his cap of terror on,
And crooked glaive—the lively, supple Greek,
And swarthy Nubia's mutilated son;
The bearded Turk that rarely deigns to speak,
Master of all around, too potent to be meek,

59

Are mixed conspicuous: some recline in groups,
Scanning the motley scene that varies round;
There some grave Moslem to devotion stoops,
And some that smoke, and some that play, are found;

Here the Albanian proudly treads the ground;
Half-whispering there the Greek is heard to prate;
Hark! from the Mosque the nightly solemn sound,
The Muezzin's call doth shake the minaret,
'There is no god but God!—to prayer—lo! God is great!'

60

Just at this season Ramazani's fast
Through the long day its penance did maintain:
But when the lingering twilight hour was past,
Revel and feast assumed the rule again:
Now all was bustle, and the menial train
Prepared and spread the plenteous board within;
The vacant Gallery now seemed made in vain,
But from the chambers came the mingling din,
As page and slave anon were passing out and in.

61

Here woman's voice is never heard: apart,
And scarce permitted—guarded, veiled—to move,
She yields to one her person and her heart,
Tamed to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove:
For, not unhappy in her Master's love,
And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
Who never quits the breast—no meaner passion shares.

62

In marble-paved pavilion, where a spring
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breathed repose,
All reclined, a man of war and woes:
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

63

It is not that yon hoary lengthening beard
Ill suits the passions which belong to Youth;
Love conquers Age—so Hafiz hath averred,
So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth—
But crimes that scorn the tender voice of ruth,
Beseeching all men ill, but most the man
In years, have marked him with a tiger's tooth;
Blood follows blood, and, through their mortal span,
In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began.

64

'Mid many things most new to ear and eye
The Pilgrim rested here his weary feet,
And gazed around on Moslem luxury,
Till quickly wearied with that spacious seat
Of Wealth and Wantonness, the choice retreat
Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise:
And were it humbler it in sooth were sweet;
And Peace abhorreth artificial joys,
And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the zest of both destroys.

65

Fierce are Albania's children, yet they lack
Not virtues, were those virtues more mature.
Where is the foe that ever saw their back?
Who can so well the toil of War endure?
Their native fastnesses not more secure
Than they in doubtful time of troublous need:
Their wrath how deadly! but their friendship sure,
When Gratitude or Valour bids them bleed—
Unshaken rushing on where'er their Chief may lead.

66

Childe Harold saw them in their Chieftain's tower
Thronging to War in splendour and success;
And after viewed them, when, within their power,
Himself awhile the victim of distress;

That saddening hour when bad men hotlier press:
But these did shelter him beneath their roof,
When less barbarians would have cheered him less,
And fellow-countrymen have stood aloof—
In aught that tries the heart, how few withstand the proof!

67

It chanced that adverse winds once drove his bark
Full on the coast of Suli's shaggy shore,
When all around was desolate and dark;
To land was perilous, to sojourn more;
Yet for awhile the mariners forbore,
Dubious to trust where Treachery might lurk:
At length they ventured forth, though doubting sore
That those who loathe alike the Frank and Turk
Might once again renew their ancient butcher-work.

68

Vain fear! the Suliotes stretched the welcome hand,
Led them o'er rocks and past the dangerous swamp,
Kinder than polished slaves though not so bland,
And piled the hearth, and wrung their garments damp,
And filled the bowl, and trimmed the cheerful lamp,
And spread their fare—though homely, all they had:
Such conduct bears Philanthropy's rare stamp:
To rest the weary and to soothe the sad,
Doth lesson happier men, and shames at least the bad.

69

It came to pass, that when he did address
Himself to quit at length this mountain-land,
Combined marauders half-way barred egress,
And wasted far and near with glaive and brand;
And therefore did he take a trusty band
To traverse Acarnania's forest wide,
In war well-seasoned, and with labours tanned,
Till he did greet white Achelous' tide,
And from his further bank Ætolia's wolds espied.

70

Where lone Utraikye forms its circling cove,
And weary waves retire to gleam at rest,
How brown the foliage of the green hill's grove,
Nodding at midnight o'er the calm bay's breast,
As winds come lightly whispering from the West,
Kissing, not ruffling, the blue deep's serene:—
Here Harold was received a welcome guest;
Nor did he pass unmoved the gentle scene,
For many a joy could he from Night's soft presence glean.

71

On the smooth shore the night-fires brightly blazed,
The feast was done, the red wine circling fast,
And he that unawares had there ygzazed
With gaping wonderment had stared aghast;
For ere night's midmost, stillest hour was past,
The native revels of the troop began;
Each Palikar his sabre from him cast,
And bounding hand in hand, man linked to man,
Yelling their uncouth dirge, long daunced the kirtled clan.

72

Childe Harold at a little distance stood
And viewed, but not displeased, the revelrie,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude:
In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee;
And, as the flames along their faces gleamed,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles streamed,
While thus in concert they this lay half sang, half screamed:—

I

Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy 'larum afar
Gives hope to the valiant, and promise of war;

All the Sons of the mountains arise at the note,
Chimariot, Illyrian, and dark Suliote!

II

Oh! who is more brave than a dark Suliote,
In his snowy camese and his shaggy capote?
To the wolf and the vulture he leaves his wild flock,
And descends to the plain like the stream from the rock.

III

Shall the sons of Chimari, who never forgive
The fault of a friend, bid an enemy live?
Let those guns so unerring such vengeance forego?
What mark is so fair as the breast of a foe?

IV

Macedonia sends forth her invincible race;
For a time they abandon the cave and the chaise;
But those scarfs of blood-red shall be redder, before
The sabre is sheathed and the battle is o'er.

V

Then the Pirates of Parga that dwell by the waves,
And teach the pale Franks what it is to be slaves,
Shall leave on the beach the long galley and oar,
And track to his covert the captive on shore.

VI

I ask not the pleasures that riches supply,
My sabre shall win what the feeble must buy;
Shall win the young bride with her long flowing hair,
And many a maid from her mother shall tear.

VII

I love the fair face of the maid in her youth,
Her caresses shall lull me, her music shall soothe;

Let her bring from the chamber her many-toned lyre,
And sing us a song on the fall of her Sire.

VIII

Remember the moment when Previsa fell,
The shrieks of the conquered, the conquerors' yell;
The roofs that we fired, and the plunder we shared,
The wealthy we slaughtered, the lovely we spared.

IX

I talk not of mercy, I talk not of fear;
He neither must know who would serve the Vizier:
Since the days of our Prophet the Crescent ne'er saw
A chief ever glorious like Ali Pashaw.

X

Dark Muchtar his son to the Danube is sped,
Let the yellow-haired Giaours view his horse-tail with dread;
When his Delhis come dashing in blood o'er the banks,
How few shall escape from the Muscovite ranks!

XI

Selictar! unsheathe then our chief's Scimitar;
Tambourgi! thy 'larum gives promise of War.
Ye mountains, that see us descend to the shore,
Shall view us as Victors, or view us no more!

73

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed Worth!
Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scattered children forth,
And long accustomed bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylæ's sepulchral strait—

Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?

74

Spirit of Freedom! when on Phyle's brow
Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus and his train,
Couldst thou forebode the dismal hour which now
Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
From birth till death enslaved—in word, in deed, unmanned.

75

In all save form alone, how changed! and who
That marks the fire still sparkling in each eye,
Who but would deem their bosoms burned anew
With thy unquenchèd beam, lost Liberty!
And many dream withal the hour is nigh
That gives them back their fathers' heritage:
For foreign arms and aid they fondly sigh,
Nor solely dare encounter hostile rage,
Or tear their name defiled from Slavery's mournful page.

76

Hereditary Bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free *themselves* must strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? No!
True—they may lay your proud despoilers low,
But not for you will Freedom's Altars flame.
Shades of the Helots! triumph o'er your foe!
Greece! change thy lords, thy state is still the same;
Thy glorious day is o'er, but not thine years of shame.

77

The city won for Allah from the Giaour
The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest;
And the Serai's impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
Or Wahab's rebel brood who dared divest
The Prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,
May wind their path of blood along the West;
But ne'er will Freedom seek this fated soil,
But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil.

78

Yet mark their mirth—ere Lenten days begin,
That penance which their holy rites prepare
To shrive from Man his weight of mortal sin,
By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;
But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,
Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,
To take of pleasaunce each his secret share,
In motley robe to dance at masking ball,
And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.

79

And whose more rife with merriment than thine,
Oh Stamboul! once the Empress of their reign?
Though turbans now pollute Sophia's shrine,
And Greece her very altars eyes in vain:
(Alas! her woes will still pervade my strain!)
Gay were her minstrels once, for free her throng,
All felt the common joy they now must feign,
Nor oft I've seen such sight, nor heard such song,
As wooed the eye, and thrilled the Bosphorus along.

80

Loud was the lightsome tumult on the shore;
Oft Music changed, but never ceased her tone,
And timely echoed back the measured oar,
And rippling waters made a pleasant moan:

The Queen of tides on high consenting shone,
And when a transient breeze swept o'er the wave,
'Twas, as if darting from her heavenly throne,
A brighter glance her form reflected gave,
Till sparkling billows seemed to light the banks they lave.

81

Glanced many a light Caique along the foam,
Danced on the shore the daughters of the land,
No thought had man or maid of rest or home,
While many a languid eye and thrilling hand
Exchanged the look few bosoms may withstand,
Or gently prest, returned the pressure still:
Oh Love! young Love! bound in thy rosy band,
Let sage or cynic prattle as he will,
These hours, and only these, redeem Life's years of ill!

82

But, midst the throng in merry masquerade,
Lurk there no hearts that throb with secret pain,
Even through the closest searment half betrayed?
To such the gentle murmurs of the main
Seem to re-echo all they mourn in vain;
To such the gladness of the gamesome crowd
Is source of wayward thought and stern disdain:
How do they loathe the laughter idly loud,
And long to change the robe of revel for the shroud!

83

This must he feel, the true-born son of Greece,
If Greece one true-born patriot still can boast:
Not such as prate of War, but skulk in Peace,
The bondsman's peace, who sighs for all he lost,
Yet with smooth smile his Tyrant can accost,
And wield the slavish sickle, not the sword:
Ah! Greece! they love thee least who owe thee most—
Their birth, their blood, and that sublime record
Of hero Sires, who shame thy now degenerate horde!

84

When riseth Lacedemon's Hardihood,
When Thebes Epaminondas rears again,
When Athens' children are with hearts endued,
When Grecian mothers shall give birth to men,
Then may'st thou be restored; but not till then.
A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust: and when
Can Man its shattered splendour renovate,
Recall its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate?

85

And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
Land of lost Gods and godlike men, art thou!
Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow,
Proclaim thee Nature's varied favourite now:
Thy fanes, thy temples to thy surface bow,
Commingling slowly with heroic earth,
Broke by the share of every rustic plough:
So perish monuments of mortal birth,
So perish all in turn, save well-recorded *Worth*:

86

Save where some solitary column mourns
Above its prostrate brethren of the cave;
Save where Tritonia's airy shrine adorns
Colonna's cliff, and gleams along the wave;
Save o'er some warrior's half-forgotten grave,
Where the gray stones and unmolested grass
Ages, but not Oblivion, feebly brave;
While strangers, only, not regardless, pass,
Lingering like me, perchance, to gaze, and sigh 'Alas!'

87

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild;
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva smiled,
And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields;

There the blithe Bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The free-born wanderer of thy mountain-air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare:
Art, Glory, Freedom fail—but Nature still is fair.

88

Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of Wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon;
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold
Defies the power which crushed thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon.

89

The Sun, the soil—but not the slave, the same;
Unchanged in all except its foreign Lord—
Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame
The Battle-field, where Persia's victim horde
First bowed beneath the brunt of Hellas' sword,
As on the morn to distant Glory dear,
When Marathon became a magic word;
Which uttered, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the Conqueror's career,

90

The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow—
The fiery Greek, his red pursuing spear;
Mountains above—Earth's, Ocean's plain below—
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!
Such was the scene—what now remaineth here?
What sacred Trophy marks the hallowed ground,
Recording Freedom's smile and Asia's tear?
The rifled urn, the violated mound,
The dust thy courser's hoof, rude stranger! spurns around.

91

Yet to the remnants of thy Splendour past
Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied, throng;
Long shall the voyager, with th' Ionian blast,
Hail the bright clime of Battle and of Song:
Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore;
Boast of the agèd! lesson of the young!
Which Sages venerate and Bards adore,
As Pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore.

92

The parted bosom clings to wonted home,
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth;
He that is lonely—hither let him roam,
And gaze complacent on congenial earth.
Greece is no lightsome land of social mirth:
But he whom Sadness sootheth may abide,
And scarce regret the region of his birth,
When wandering slow by Delphi's sacred side,
Or gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died.

93

Let such approach this consecrated Land,
And pass in peace along the magic waste;
But spare its relics—let no busy hand
Deface the scenes, already how defaced!
Not for such purpose were these altars placed:
Revere the remnants Nations once revered:
So may our Country's name be undisgraced,
So may'st thou prosper where thy youth was reared,
By every honest joy of Love and Life endeared!

94

For thee, who thus in too protracted song
Hath soothed thine Idlesse with inglorious lays,
Soon shall thy voice be lost amid the throng
Of louder Minstrels in these later days:

To such resign the strife for fading Bays—
Ill may such contest now the spirit move
Which heeds nor keen Reproach nor partial Praise,
Since cold each kinder heart that might approve—
And none are left to please when none are left to love.

95

Thou too art gone, thou loved and lovely one!
Whom Youth and Youth's affections bound to me;
Who did for me what none beside have done,
Nor shrank from one albeit unworthy thee.
What is my Being! thou hast ceased to be!
Nor staid to welcome here thy wanderer home,
Who mourns o'er hours which we no more shall see—
Would they had never been, or were to come!
Would he had ne'er returned to find fresh cause to roam!

96

Oh! ever loving, lovely, and beloved!
How selfish Sorrow ponders on the past,
And clings to thoughts now better far removed!
But Time shall tear thy shadow from me last.
All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death! thou hast;
The Parent, Friend, and now the more than friend:
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,
Hath snatched the little joy that Life had yet to lend.

97

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,
And follow all that Peace disdains to seek?
Where Revel calls, and Laughter, vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak;
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique:
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer.

What is the worst of woes that wait on Age?
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
To view each loved one blotted from Life's page,
And be alone on earth, as I am now:
Before the Chastener humbly let me bow,
O'er Hearts divided and o'er Hopes destroyed:
Roll on, vain days! full reckless may ye flow,
Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoyed,
And with the ills of Eld mine earlier years alloyed.

CANTO THE THIRD

I

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
ADA! sole daughter of my house and heart?¹
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted,—not as now we part,
But with a hope.—

Awaking with a start,

The waters heave around me; and on high
The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

2

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

3

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life,—where not a flower appears.

¹ Ada Byron had been born in December 1815.

4

Since my young days of passion—joy or pain—
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string—
And both may jar: it may be that in vain
I would essay, as I have sung, to sing:
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling;
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling
Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

5

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him—nor below
Can Love or Sorrow, Fame, Ambition, Strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance—he can tell
Why Thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpaired, though old, in the Soul's haunted cell.

6

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now—
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth.

7

Yet must I think less wildly:—I *have* thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:

And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis too late!
Yet am I changed; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what Time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

8

Something too much of this:—but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal:
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last—
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
And Life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

9

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he filled again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deemed its spring perpetual—but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which galled for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clanked not; worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

10

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation—such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

II

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen on Beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, rolled
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his Youth's fond prime.

12

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man, with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompelled,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To Spirits against whom his own rebelled,
Proud though in desolation—which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

13

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where rolled the Ocean, thereon was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tone
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on the lake.

14

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:

Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

15

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage—so the heat
Of his impeded Soul would through his bosom eat.

16

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of Hope left—but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the plundered wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck,—
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.

17

Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot marked with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but *the moral's truth* tells simpler so.
As the ground was before, thus let it be;—
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of Fields! king-making Victory?

18

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!
How in an hour the Power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!—
In 'pride of place' here last the Eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
Ambition's life and labours all were vain—
He wears the shattered links of the World's broken chain.

19

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make *One* submit?
Or league to teach all Kings true Sovereignty?
What! shall reviving Thralldom again be
The patched-up Idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to Thrones? No! *prove* before ye praise!

20

If not, o'er one fallen Despot boast no more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain, years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions: all that most endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a Sword—
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant Lord.

21

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's Capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry—and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;

A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

22

Did ye not hear it?—No—'twas but the Wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer—clearer—deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

23

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated Chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell;
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

24

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro—
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness—
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

25

And there was mounting in hot haste—the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war—
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the Morning Star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—‘The foe! They come! they
come!’

26

And wild and high the ‘Cameron’s Gathering’ rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn’s hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes.—
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan’s—Donald’s—fame rings in each clansman’s ears!

27

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with Nature’s tear-drops, as they pass—
Grieving, if aught inanimate e’er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which *now* beneath them, but *above* shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living Valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high Hope, shall moulder cold and low.

28

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life;—
Last eve in Beauty’s circle proudly gay;
The Midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The Morn the marshalling in arms,—the Day

Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend,—foe—in one red burial blent!

29

Their praise is hymned by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his Sire some wrong,¹
And partly that bright names will hallow song;
And his was of the bravest, and when showered
The death-bolts deadliest the thinned files along,
Even where the thickest of War's tempest lowered,
They reached no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant
Howard!

30

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.

31

I turned to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake

¹ The father of 'young gallant Howard' was Lord Carlisle, Byron's guardian, so savagely attacked in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honoured but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

32

They mourn, but smile at length—and, smiling, mourn:
The tree will wither long before it fall;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthrall;
The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on:

33

Even as a broken Mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies—and makes
A thousand images of one that was
The same—and still the more, the more it breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
Living in shattered guise; and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

34

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison,—a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches; for it were
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste: Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life,—say, would he name three-
score?

35

The Psalmist numbered out the years of man:
They are enough; and if thy tale be *true*,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say—
'Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!'
And this is much—and all—which will not pass away.

36

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose Spirit, antithetically mixed,
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixed;
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For Daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

37

Conqueror and Captive of the Earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who wooed thee once, thy Vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness—till thou wert
A God unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

38

Oh, more or less than man—in high or low—
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield;

An Empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skilled,
Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of War,
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest Star.

39

Yet well thy soul hath brooked the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it Wisdom, Coldness, or deep Pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast snuled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;—
When Fortune fled her spoiled and favourite child,
He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

40

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
Ambition steeled thee on too far to show
That just habitual scorn, which could contemn
Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel, not so
'To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use
Till they were turned unto thine overthrow:
'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;
So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose.

41

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had helped to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone;
The part of Philip's son was thine—not then
(Unless aside thy Purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men:
For sceptred Cynics Earth were far too wide a den.

42

But Quiet to quick bosoms is a Hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the Soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

43

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
By their contagion; Conquerors and Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to those they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach Mankind the lust to shine or rule:

44

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,
And yet so nursed and bigoted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by,
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

45

He who ascends to mountain tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.

Though high *above* the Sun of Glory glow,
And far *beneath* the Earth and Ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

46

Away with these! true Wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties; streams and dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And clucless castles breathing stern farewells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.

47

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying Wind,
Or holding dark communion with the Cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud;
Banners on high, and battles passed below;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

48

Beneath these battlements, within those walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors should have,
But History's purchased page to call them great?
A wider space—an ornamented grave?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave.

49

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!
And Love, which lent a blazon to their shields,
With emblems well devised by amorous pride,
Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide;
But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on
Keen contest and destruction near allied,
And many a tower for some fair mischief won,
Saw the discoloured Rhine beneath its ruin run.

50

But Thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict,—then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven—and to seem such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream?—that it should Lethe be.

51

A thousand battles have assailed thy banks,
But these and half their fame have passed away,
And Slaughter heaped on high his weltering ranks:
Their very graves are gone, and what are they?
Thy tide washed down the blood of yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
Glassed, with its dancing light, the sunny ray;
But o'er the blackened Memory's blighting dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem.

52

Thus Harold inly said, and passed along,
Yet not insensible to all which here
Awoke the jocund birds to early song.
In glens which might have made even exile dear:

Though on his brow were graven lines austere,
And tranquil sternness, which had ta'en the place
Of feelings fiercer far but less severe—
Joy was not always absent from his face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

53

Nor was all Love shut from him, though his days
Of Passion had consumed themselves to dust.
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such as smile upon us; the heart must
Leap kindly back to kindness, though Disgust
Hath weaned it from all worldlings: thus he felt,
For there was soft Remembrance, and sweet Trust
In one fond breast, to which his own would melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwell.

54

And he had learned to love,—I know not why,
For this in such as him seems strange of mood,—
The helpless looks of blooming Infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipped affections have to grow,
In him this glowed when all beside had ceased to glow.

55

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and,—though unwed,
That love was pure—and, far above disguise,
Had stood the test of mortal enmities,
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

I

The castled Crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine;
And hills all rich with blossomed trees,
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scattered cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strewed a scene, which I should see
With double joy wert *thou* with me.

II

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,
And hands which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this Paradise;
Above, the frequent feudal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of gray;
And many a rock which steeply lowers,
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;
But one thing want these banks of Rhine,—
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

III

I send the lilies given to me—
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must withered be,
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherished them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy soul to mine even here,—
When thou behold'st them drooping nigh,
And know'st them gathered by the Rhine,
And offered from my heart to thine!

IV

The river nobly foams and flows—
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty's varying round:
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To Nature and to me so dear—
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine!

56

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simple Pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are Heroes' ashes hid—
Our enemy's—but let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, gushed from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume.

57

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career,—
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant Spirit's bright repose;—
For he was Freedom's Champion, one of those
The few in number, who had not o'erstept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul—and thus men o'er him wept.

58

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shattered wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did light:—

A Tower of Victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watched along the plain:
But Peace destroyed what War could never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain—
On which the iron shower for years had poured in vain.

59

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united,
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

60

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is coloured by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!
'Tis with the thankful glance of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise—more glaring shine,
But none unite, in one attaching maze,
The brilliant, fair, and soft,—the glories of old days.

61

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,—
The wild rocks shaped, as they had turrets been,
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall.

62

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The Palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold Sublimity, where forms and falls
The Avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

63

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be passed in vain,—
Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquered on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeathed his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument;—the Stygian coast
Unsepulchred they roamed, and shrieked each wandering
ghost.

64

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely cause
Of vice-entailed Corruption; they no land
Doomed to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making Kings' rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

65

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days;
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewildered gaze

Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levelled Aventicum, hath strewed her subject lands.

66

And there—oh! sweet and sacred be the name!
Julia—the daughter—the devoted—gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
The life she lived in—but the Judge was just—
And then she died on him she could not save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind—one heart—one dust.

67

But these are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither, though the Earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved—their death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of Worth
Should be—and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality, look forth
In the Sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

68

Lake Lemman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue:
There is too much of Man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penned me in their fold.

69

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till, too late and long,
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

70

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own Soul turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea
The boldest steer but where their ports invite—
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity,
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored ne'er shall be.

71

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing Lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to inflict or bear?

72

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see

Nothing to loathe in Nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky—the peak—the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle—and not in vain.

73

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life:—
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the Blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

74

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When Elements to Elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see less dazzling but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

75

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my Soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not condemn
All objects, if compared with these? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turned below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?

76

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One, whose dust was once all fire,—
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while—a passing guest,
Where he became a being,—whose desire
Was to be glorious; 'twas a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all rest.

77

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
The apostle of Affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over Passion, and from Woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew
How to make Madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts, a heavenly hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

78

His love was Passion's essence—as a tree
On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus and enamoured, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal Beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.

79

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;
This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fevered lip would greet,

From hers, who but with friendship his would meet;
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flashed the thrilled Spirit's love-devouring heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possess.

80

His life was one long war with self-fought foes,
Or friends by him self-banished; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was phrensied,—wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which Skill could never find;
But he was phrensied by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

81

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more:
Did he not this for France? which lay, before,
Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years,
Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers,
Roused up to too much wrath which follows o'ergrown fears?

82

They made themselves a fearful monument!
The wreck of old opinions—things which grew,
Breathed from the birth of Time: the veil they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall view;
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour refilled,
As heretofore, because Ambition was self-willed.

83

But this will not endure, nor be endured!
Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt.
They might have used it better, but, allured
By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt
On one another; Pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they,
Who in Oppression's darkness caved had dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourished with the day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

84

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquished, bear
Silence, but not submission: in his lair
Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came—it cometh—and will come,—the power
To punish or forgive—in *one* we shall be slower.

85

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn Ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

86

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights appear

Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.

87

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy—for the Starlight dews
All silently their tears of Love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hucs.

88

Ye Stars! which are the poetry of Heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A Beauty and a Mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That Fortune,—Fame,—Power,—Life, have named them-
selves a Star.

89

All Heaven and Earth are still—though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:—
All Heaven and Earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentrated in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of Being, and a sense
Of that, which is of all Creator and Defence.

90

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of Music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty;—'twould disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

91

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places, and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unvalled temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings—Goth or Greek—
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air—
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

92

The sky is changed!—and such a change! Oh Night,
And Storm, and Darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in Woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

93

And this is in the Night:—Most glorious Night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!

How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young Earthquake's birth.

94

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted:
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed:—
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage:

95

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around: of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath forked
His lightnings,—as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as Desolation worked,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked.

96

Sky—Mountains—River—Winds—Lake—Lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder—and a Soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
But where of ye, O Tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

97

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,—could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul—heart—mind—passions—feelings—strong or weak—
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel—and yet breathe—into *one* word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

98

The Morn is up again, the dewy Morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb,—
And glowing into day: we may resume
The march of our existence: and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much, that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly.

99

Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate Thought;
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above,
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And Sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the Soul with Hope that woos, then
mocks.

100

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod,—
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains; where the God
Is a pervading Life and Light,—so shown

Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

101

All things are here of *Him*; from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bowed Waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the Wood,
The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude.

102

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
And fairy-formed and many-coloured things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of Beauty, here extend
Mingling—and made by Love—unto one mighty end.

103

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who knows
That tender mystery, will love the more;
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,
And the world's waste, have driven him far from those,
For 'tis his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays, or grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity!

104

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau the spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which Passion must allot
To the Mind's purified beings; 'twas the ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallowed it with loveliness: 'tis lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne.

105

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been the abodes
Of Names which unto you bequeathed a name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of Fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame
Of Heaven again assailed—if Heaven, the while,
On man and man's research could deign do more than smile

106

The one was fire and fickleness, a child
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various,—gay, grave, sage, or wild,—
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined;
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents: But his own
Breathed most in ridicule,—which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone,—
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

107

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And living wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt—with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,

Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony,—that master spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
And doomed him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

108

Yet, peace be with their ashes,—for by them
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge,—far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things shall be made
Known unto all,—or hope and dread allayed
By slumber, on one pillow, in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decayed;
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'Twill be to be forgiven—or suffer what is just.

109

But let me quit Man's works, again to read
His Maker's, spread around me, and suspend
This page, which from my reveries I feed,
Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region, where
The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

110

Italia, top! Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the Soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won thee,
To the last halo of the Chiefs and Sages
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of empires—still,
The fount at which the panting Mind assuages
Her thirst of knowledge, quaffing there her fill,
Flows from the eternal source of Rome's imperial hill.

188

III

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
Renewed with no kind auspices:—to feel
We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be,—and to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught,—
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal,
Which is the tyrant Spirit of our thought,—
Is a stern task of soul:—No matter,—it is taught.

II2

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile,—
The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth,—but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or smile,
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;—
I stood and stand alone,—remembered or forgot.

II3

I have not loved the World, nor the World me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coined my cheek to smiles,—nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo: in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such—I stood
Among them, but not of them—in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

II4

I have not loved the World, nor the World me,—
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things,—hopes which will not deceive,

And Virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snares for the failing; I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve—
That two, or one, are almost what they seem,—
That Goodness is no name—and Happiness no dream.

115

My daughter! with thy name this song begun!
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end!—
I see thee not—I hear thee not—but none
Can be so wrapt in thee; Thou art the Friend
To whom the shadows of far years extend:
Albeit my brow thou never should'st behold,
My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
And reach into thy heart,—when mine is cold,—
A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould.

116

To aid thy mind's development,—to watch
Thy dawn of little joys,—to sit and see
Almost thy very growth,—to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects,—wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss,—
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me—
Yet this was in my nature:—as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

117

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me,—though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation, and a broken claim:
Though the grave closed between us,—'twere the same—
I know that thou wilt love me—though to drain
My blood from out thy being were an aim,
And an attainment,—all would be in vain,—
Still thou would'st love me, still that more than life retain.

118

The child of Love! though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in Convulsion! Of thy sire
These were the elements,—and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee,—but thy fire
Shall be more tempered, and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As—with a sigh—I deem thou might'st have been to me!

CANTO THE FOURTH

[Abridged]

I

I stood in Venice, on the 'Bridge of Sighs';
A Palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the Enchanter's wand:
A thousand Years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Looked to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sat in state, throned on her hundred isles!

2

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from Ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A Ruler of the waters and their powers:
And such she was;—her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers:
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increased.

3

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless Gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And Music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here.
States fall—Arts fade—but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The Revel of the earth—the Masque of Italy!

4

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the Dogeless city's vanished sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre,¹ can not be swept or worn away—
The keystones of the Arch! though all were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

5

The Beings of the Mind are not of clay:
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which Fate
Prohibits to dull life in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these Spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

6

Such is the refuge of our youth and age—
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;
And this wan feeling peoples many a page—
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:
Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

7

I saw or dreamed of such,—but let them go,—
They came like Truth—and disappeared like dreams;
And whatsoe'er they were—are now but so:
I could replace them if I would; still teems

¹ Byron was a great reader of plays and had a very proper admiration for Otway's *Venice Preserved*.

My mind with many a form which aptly seems
Such as I sought for, and at moments found;
Let these too go—for waking Reason deems
Such over-weening phantasies unsound,
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

8

I've taught me other tongues—and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger; to the mind
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
A country with—aye, or without mankind;
Yet was I born where men are proud to be,—
Not without cause; and should I leave behind
The inviolate Island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

9

Perhaps I loved it well; and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
My Spirit shall resume it—if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line
With my land's language: if too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline,—
If my Fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

10

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honoured by the Nations—let it be—
And light the Laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me—
'Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.'
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need—
The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
I planted,—they have torn me,—and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a
seed.

II

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her Lord,
And annual marriage now no more renewed—
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St. Mark yet sees his Lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his withered power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a Queen with an unequalled dower.

I2

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities; Nations melt
From Power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like Lauwine loosened from the mountain's belt;
Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe.

I3

Before St. Mark still glow his Steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not bridled?—Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, unto whence she rose!
Better be whelmed beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in Destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom Submission wrings an infamous repose.

I4

In youth She was all glory,—a new Tyre,—
Her very by-word sprung from Victory,
The 'Planter of the Lion,' which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject Earth and Sea;

Though making many slaves, Herself still free,
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!
For ye are names no Time nor Tyranny can blight.

15

Statues of glass—all shivered—the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthral,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

16

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermastered Victor stops—the reins
Fall from his hands—his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt—he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the Bard for Freedom and his strains.

17

Thus, Venice! if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot—
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations,—most of all,
Albion! to thee: the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

18

I loved her from my boyhood—she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea—
Of Joy the sojourn, and of Wealth the mart;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's art,
Had stamped her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part;
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

19

I can repeople with the past—and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chastened down, enough;
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice! have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time can not benumb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

★ ★ ★

27

The Moon is up, and yet it is not night—
Sunset divides the sky with her—a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be,—
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,—
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest!

28

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny Sea heaves brightly, and remains
Rolled o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,

As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaimed her order:—gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glassed within it glows,

29

Filled with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
Comes down upon the waters! all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse:
And now they change—a paler Shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting Day
Dies like the Dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away—
The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone—and all is gray.

30

There is a tomb in Arqua;—reared in air,
Pillared in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The Pilgrims of his Genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes:
Watering the tree which bears his Lady's name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to Fame.

31

They keep his dust in Arqua, where he died—
The mountain-village where his latter days
Went down the vale of years; and 'tis their pride—
An honest pride—and let it be their praise,
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
His mansion and his sepulchre—both plain
And venerably simple—such as raise
A feeling more accordant with his strain
Than if a Pyramid formed his monumental fane.

32

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems made
For those who their mortality have felt,
And sought a refuge from their hopes decayed
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away
Of busy cities, now in vain displayed,
For they can lure no further; and the ray
Of a bright Sun can make sufficient holiday.

★ ★ ★

48

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls:
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn, and wine, and oil—and Plenty leaps
To laughing life, with her redundant Horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeemed to a new Morn.

49

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with Beauty—we inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
Part of its immortality—the veil
Of heaven is half undrawn—within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What Mind can make, when Nature's self would fail;
And to the fond Idolaters of old
Envy the innate flash which such a Soul could mould:

50

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with Beauty, till the heart
Reels with its fulness; there—for ever there—
Chained to the chariot of triumphal Art,

We stand as captives, and would not depart.
Away!—there need no words, nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have eyes:
Blood—pulse—and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's
prize.

51

Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise?
Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or,
In all thy perfect Goddess-ship, when lies
Before thee thy own vanquished Lord of War?
And gazing in thy face as toward a star,
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy lips are
With lava kisses melting while they burn,
Showered on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an urn!

52

Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love—
Their full divinity inadequate
That feeling to express, or to improve—
The Gods become as mortals—and man's fate
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight
Of earth recoils upon us;—let it go!
We can recall such visions, and create,
From what has been, or might be, things which grow
Into thy statue's form, and look like gods below.

* * *

78

Oh, Rome! my Country! City of the Soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone Mother of dead Empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress—hear the owl—and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples—Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

79

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

80

The Goth, the Christian—Time—War—Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hilled City's pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian Monarchs ride,
Where the car climbed the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:—
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

81

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The Ocean hath his chart, the Stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert—where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' 'it is clear'—
When but some false Mirage of ruin rises near.

82

Alas! the lofty city! and, alas,
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The Conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!

Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page!—but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside—decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

* * *

99

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone.
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of Eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by Time o'erthrown;—
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so locked, so hid?—A woman's grave.

100

But who was she, the Lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's—or more—a Roman's bed?
What race of Chiefs and Heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived—how loved—how died she? Was she not
So honoured—and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

101

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful Queen,
Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs?—for such the affections are.

202

102

Perchance she died in youth—it may be, bowed
With wocs far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weighed upon her gentle dust: a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites—early death—yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illumine
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

103

Perchance she died in age—surviving all,
Charms—kindred—children—with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome—But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know—Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride!

* * *

115

Egeria! sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast; whate'er thou art
Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair—
Or—it might be—a Beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common Votary there
Too much adoring—whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful Thought, and softly bodied forth.

116

The mosses of thy Fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded Spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed Genius of the place,

Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep
Prisoned in marble—bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er—and, round—fern, flowers, and ivy, creep

117

Fantastically tangled: the green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms—through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles—and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the Violet's deep blue eyes,
Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

118

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
The purple Midnight veiled that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy—and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
Of an enamoured Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love—the earliest Oracle!

119

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports? could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of Heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—
The dull satiety which all destroys—
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloy?

120

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert! whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison; such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the World's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

121

Oh, Love! no habitant of earth thou art—
An unscen Seraph, we believe in thee,—
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,—
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled Heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquenched soul—parched—wearied—wrung
—and riven.

122

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation:—where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

123

Who loves, raves—'tis youth's frenzy—but the cure
Is bitterer still, as charm by charm unwinds
Which robbed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor Worth nor Beauty dwells from out the mind's

Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds—
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize—wealthiest when most undone.

124

We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
Sick—sick; unfound the boon—unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
Love, Fame, Ambition, Avarice—'tis the same,
Each idle—and all ill—and none the worst—
For all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

125

Few—none—find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies—but to recur, ere long,
Envenomed with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual God
And Miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust we all have trod.

126

Our life is a false nature—'tis not in
The harmony of things,—this hard decree,
This unradicable taint of Sin,
This boundless Upas, this all-blasting tree,
Whose root is Earth—whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew—
Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see,
And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

127

Yet let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought—our last and only place
Of refuge; this, at least, shall still be mine:
Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chained and tortured—cabined, cribbed, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the Truth should shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
The beam pours in—for Time and Skill will couch the blind.

128

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 'twere its natural torches—for divine
Should be the light which streams here,—to illumine
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
Of Contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

129

Hues which have words and speak to ye of Heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A Spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the Palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till Ages are its dower.

130

Oh, Time! the Beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin—Comforter
And only Healer when the heart hath bled;—
Time! the Corrector where our judgments err,

The test of Truth, Love—sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists—from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer—
Time, the Avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

131

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate—
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years—though few, yet full of fate:—
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not overwhelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain—shall *they* not mourn?

132

And Thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long—
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution—just,
Had it but been from hands less near—in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake! thou shalt, and must.

133

It is not that I may not have incurred,
For my ancestral faults or mine, the wound
I bleed withal; and, had it been conferred
With a just weapon, it had flowed unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground—
To thee I do devote it—*Thou* shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found—
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake—
But let that pass—I sleep—but *Thou* shalt yet awake.

134

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffered: let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

135

That curse shall be Forgiveness.—Have I not—
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven!—
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

136

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the aspaltry few—
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true—
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

137

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire

Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of Love.

138

The seal is set.—Now welcome, thou dread Power
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow upon the spot—all-seeing but unseen.

139

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,
As man was slaughtered by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms—on battle-plain or listed spot?
Both are but theatres—where the chief actors rot.

140

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who
won.

141

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart—and that was far away;
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay—
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday—
All this rushed with his blood—Shall he expire
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

142

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;—
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roared or murmured like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
Was Death or Life—the playthings of a crowd—
My voice sounds much—and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void—seats crushed—walls bowed—
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

143

A Ruin—yet what Ruin! from its mass
Walls—palaces—half-cities, have been reared;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appeared.
Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is neared:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all—years—man—have reft
away.

144

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there—
When the stars twinkle through the loops of Time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air

The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head—
When the light shines serene but doth not glare—
Then in this magic circle raise the dead;—
Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their dust ye tread.

145

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
'When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
'And when Rome falls—the World.' From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unaltered all—
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill—
The World—the same wide den—of thieves, or what ye will.

* * *

175

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the Sea;
The Midland Ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we followed on till the dark Euxine rolled

176

Upon the blue Symplegades: long years—
Long, though not very many—since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run—
We have had our reward—and it is here,
That we can yet feel gladdened by the Sun,
And reap from Earth—Sea—joy almost as dear
As if there were no Man to trouble what is clear.

177

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minster,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye elements!—in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
Accord me such a Being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

178

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and Music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express—yet can not all conceal.

179

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan—
Without a grave—unknelled, unconfined, and unknown.

180

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For Earth's destruction thou dost all despise,

Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies—
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to Earth:—there let him lay.

181

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And Monarchs tremble in their Capitals,
The oak Leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of Lord of thee, and Arbiter of War—
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

182

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria—Greece—Rome—Carthage—what are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play;
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now

183

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm—
Icing the Pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made—each Zone
Obeys thee—thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

184

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a Child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

185

My task is done—my song hath ceased—my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit
My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ,—
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been—and my visions flit
Less palpably before me—and the glow
Which in my Spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

186

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last—if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his—if on ye swell
A single recollection—not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with *you*, the Moral of his Strain.

The Bride of Abydos

[*The final stanza*]

Of all Byron's romantic Eastern Tales, written before he left England, *The Bride of Abydos*, published in November 1813, seems to possess most poetic quality. It was written, he declared, to divert his thoughts 'from reality to imagination—from selfish regrets to vivid recollections.' The choice of subject is significant and was commented on by the poet's readers—an ill-fated passion that springs up between a brother and a sister.

Within the place of thousand tombs
That shine beneath, while dark above
The sad but living cypress glooms
And withers not, though branch and leaf
Are stamped with an eternal grief,
Like early unrequited Love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms,
Ev'n in that deadly grove—
A single rose is shedding there
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
It looks as planted by Despair—
So white—so faint—the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high;
And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem—in vain—
To-morrow sees it bloom again!
The stalk some Spirit gently rears,
And waters with celestial tears;
For well may maids of Helle deem
That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering hour,
And buds unsheltered by a bower;
Nor droops, though Spring refuse her shower,
Nor woos the Summer beam:
To it the livelong night there sings
A Bird unseen—but not remote:
Invisible his airy wings,

But soft as harp that Houri strings
 His long entrancing note!
 It were the Bulbul; but his throat,
 Though mournful, pours not such a strain:
 For they who listen cannot leave
 The spot, but linger there and grieve,
 As if they loved in vain!
 And yet so sweet the tears they shed,
 'Tis sorrow so unmixed with dread,
 They scarce can bear the morn to break
 That melancholy spell,
 And longer yet would weep and wake,
 He sings so wild and well!
 But when the day-blush bursts from high
 Expires that magic melody.
 And some have been who could believe,
 (So fondly youthful dreams deceive,
 Yet harsh be they that blame,)

That note so piercing and profound
 Will shape and syllable its sound
 Into Zuleika's name.
 'Tis from her cypress summit heard,
 That melts in air the liquid word:
 'Tis from her lowly virgin earth
 That white rose takes its tender birth.
 There late was laid a marble stone;
 Eve saw it placed—the Morrow gone!
 It was no mortal arm that bore
 That deep fixed pillar to the shore;
 For there, as Helle's legends tell,
 Next morn 'twas found where Selim fell;
 Lashed by the tumbling tide, whose wave
 Denied his bones a holier grave:
 And there by night, reclined, 'tis said,
 Is seen a ghastly turbaned head:
 And hence extended by the billow,
 'Tis named the 'Pirate-phantom's pillow!
 Where first it lay that mourning flower
 Hath flourished; flourisheth this hour,
 Alone and dewy—coldly pure and pale;
 As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's tale

The Prisoner of Chillon

Storm-bound at Ouchy, near Lausanne, towards the end of June 1816, Byron passed the time by writing one of his most popular poems. His companion was Percy Bysshe Shelley, whose theoretical passion for Liberty he shared; and the subject he chose was the celebrated Swiss patriot, François Bonnivard, imprisoned in the Castle of Chillon from 1530 to 1536. Bonnivard's later life, however, was considerably less tragic than the poet suggests. After six years he was released from imprisonment and survived in comfort and freedom until 1570.

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

ADVERTISEMENT

When this poem was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues. With some account of his life I have been furnished, by the kindness of a citizen of that republic, which is still proud of the memory of a man worthy of the best age of ancient freedom:

François de Bonnivard, fils de Louis de Bonnivard, originaire de Seyssel et Seigneur de Lunes, naquit en 1496. Il fit ses études à Turin: en 1510 Jean Aimé de Bonnivard, son oncle, lui résigna le Prieuré de St. Victor, qui aboutissait aux murs de Genève, et qui formait un bénéfice considérable.

'Ce grand homme—(Bonnivard mérite ce titre par la force de son âme, la droiture de son cœur, la noblesse de ses intentions, la sagesse de ses conseils,

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le courage de ses démarches, l'étendue de ses connaissances, et la vivacité de son esprit),—ce grand homme, qui excitera l'admiration de tous ceux qu'une vertu héroïque peut encore émuouvoir, inspirera encore la plus vive reconnaissance dans les cœurs des Gênévois qui aiment Genève. Bonnard en fut toujours un des plus fermes appuis pour assurer la liberté de notre République, il ne craignit pas de perdre souvent la sienne; il oublia son repos; il méprisa ses richesses; il ne négligea rien pour affermir le bonheur d'une patrie qu'il honora de son choix: dès ce moment il la chérit comme le plus zélé de ses citoyens; il la servit avec l'intrépidité d'un héros, et il écrivit son Histoire avec la naïveté d'un philosophe et la chaleur d'un patriote.

'Il dit dans le commencement de son Histoire de Genève, que, *dès qu'il eut commencé de lire l'histoire des nations, il se sentit entraîné par son goût pour les Républiques, dont il épousa toujours les intérêts*. C'est ce goût pour la liberté qui lui fit sans doute adopter Genève pour sa patrie.

'Bonnard, encore jeune, s'annonça hautement comme le défenseur de Genève contre le Duc de Savoie et l'Evêque.

'En 1519, Bonnard devient le martyr de sa patrie. Le Duc de Savoie étant entré dans Genève avec cinq cent hommes, Bonnard craint le ressentiment du Duc; il voulut se retirer à Fribourg pour en éviter les suites; mais il fut trahi par deux hommes qui l'accompagnaient, et conduit par ordre du Prince à Grolée, où il resta prisonnier pendant deux ans. Bonnard était malheureux dans ses voyages: comme ses malheurs n'avaient point ralenti son zèle pour Genève, il était toujours un ennemi redoutable pour ceux qui la menaçaient, et par conséquent il devait être exposé à leurs coups. Il fut rencontré en 1530 sur le Jura par des voleurs, qui le dépouillèrent et qui le mirent encore entre les mains du Duc de Savoie: ce Prince le fit enfermer dans le Château de Chillon, où il resta sans être interrogé jusques en 1536, il fut alors délivré par les Bernois, qui s'emparèrent du Pays de Vaud.

'Bonnard, en sortant de sa captivité, eut le plaisir de trouver Genève libre et réformée: la République s'empessa de lui témoigner sa reconnaissance, et de le dédommager des maux qu'il avoit soufferts; elle le reçut Bourgeois de la ville au mois de Juin, 1536; elle lui donna la maison habitée autrefois par le Vicaire-Général, et elle lui assigna une pension de deux cent écus d'or tant qu'il séjournerait à Genève. Il fut admis dans le Conseil de Deux-Cent en 1537.

'Bonnard n'a pas fini d'être utile: après avoir travaillé à rendre Genève libre, il réussit à la rendre tolérante. Bonnard engagea le Conseil à accorder aux ecclésiastiques et aux paysans un temps suffisant pour examiner les propositions qu'on leur faisait; il réussit par sa douceur: on prêchait toujours le Christianisme avec succès quand on le prêchait avec charité.

'Bonnard fut savant: ses manuscrits, qui sont dans la bibliothèque publique, prouvent qu'il avoit bien lues les auteurs classiques Latins, et qu'il avoit approfondi la théologie et l'histoire. Ce grand homme aimait les sciences, et il croyait qu'elles pouvaient faire la gloire de Genève, aussi il ne négligea rien pour les fixer dans cette ville naissante; en 1551 il donna sa bibliothèque au public, elle fut le commencement de notre bibliothèque publique; et ces livres sont en partie les rares et belles éditions du quinzième siècle qu'on voit dans notre collection. Enfin, pendant la même année, ce bon patriote institua la République son héritière, à condition qu'elle emploierait ses biens à entretenir le collège dont on projetait la fondation.

'Il paraît que Bonnard mourut en 1570; mais on ne peut l'assurer, parcequ'il y a une lacune dans le Nécrologe depuis le mois de Juillet, 1570, jusques en 1571.'

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare:
But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

2

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:

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And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

3

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound, not full and free,
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

4

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
For him my soul was sorely moved;
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
 (When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free)—
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

5

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him his dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

6

Lake Lemán lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;

Thus much the fathom-line was sent
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
 Which round about the wave intrals:
 A double dungeon wall and wave
 Have made—and like a living grave
 Below the surface of the lake
 The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
 We heard it ripple night and day;
 Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
 And I have felt the winter's spray
 Wash through the bars when winds were high
 And wanton in the happy sky;
 And then the very rock hath rock'd,
 And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
 Because I could have smiled to see
 The death that would have set me free.

7

I said my nearer brother pined,
 I said his mighty heart declined,
 He loathed and put away his food;
 It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
 For we were used to hunter's fare,
 And for the like had little care:
 The milk drawn from the mountain goat
 Was changed for water from the moat,
 Our bread was such as captives' tears
 Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
 Since man first pent his fellow men
 Like brutes within an iron den;
 But what were these to us or him?
 These wasted not his heart or limb;
 My brother's soul was of that mould
 Which in a palace had grown cold,
 Had his free breathing been denied
 The range of the steep mountain's side;
 But why delay the truth?—he died.
 I saw, and could not hold his head,
 Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
 Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
 To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
 He died, and they unlock'd his chain,

And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
 Even from the cold earth of our cave.
 I begg'd them as a boon to lay
 His corse in dust whereon the day
 Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
 But then within my brain it wrought,
 That even in death his freeborn breast
 In such a dungeon could not rest.
 I might have spared my idle prayer—
 They coldly laugh'd, and laid him there:
 The flat and turfless earth above
 The being we so much did love;
 His empty chain above it leant,
 Such murder's fitting monument!

8

But he, the favourite and the flower,
 Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
 His mother's image in fair face,
 The infant love of all his race,
 His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
 My latest care, for whom I sought
 To hoard my life, that his might be
 Less wretched now, and one day free;
 He, too, who yet had held untired
 A spirit natural or inspired—
 He, too, was struck, and day by day
 Was wither'd on the stalk away.
 Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
 To see the human soul take wing
 In any shape, in any mood:
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
 I've seen it on the breaking ocean
 Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
 Of Sin delirious with its dread;
 But these were horrors—this was woe
 Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
 He faded, and so calm and meek,
 So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
 So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
 And grieved for those he left behind;

With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listen'd, but I could not hear;
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him:—I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived, I only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

9

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night, it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime,
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

10

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,

And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile—
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,
Lone as the corse within its shroud,
Lone as a solitary cloud,—
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

II

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,

And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart felt blind and sick.

12

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child, no sire, no kind had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

13

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below;
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town;
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,

The only one in view;
 A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
 Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
 But in it there were three tall trees,
 And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
 And by it there were waters flowing,
 And on it there were young flowers growing,
 Of gentle breath and hue.
 The fish swam by the castle wall,
 And they seem'd joyous each and all;
 The eagle rode the rising blast,
 Methought he never flew so fast
 As then to me he seem'd to fly;
 And then new tears came in my eye,
 And I felt troubled—and would fain
 I had not left my recent chain;
 And when I did descend again,
 The darkness of my dim abode
 Fell on me as a heavy load;
 It was as is a new-dug grave,
 Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
 And yet my glance, too much opprest,
 Had almost need of such a rest.

14

It might be months, or years, or days,
 I kept no count, I took no note,
 I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote;
 At last men came to set me free;
 I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
 It was at length the same to me,
 Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
 I learn'd to love despair.
 And thus when they appear'd at last,
 And all my bonds aside were cast,
 These heavy walls to me had grown
 A hermitage—and all my own!
 And half I felt as they were come
 To tear me from a second home:
 With spiders I had friendship made,
 And watch'd them in their sullen trade,

Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

Manfred

Begun in Switzerland during 1816 and published on June 16th, 1817, *Manfred* was the poetic drama into which Byron seemed to have poured out the largest share of personal feeling, at a time when he described himself as 'half mad . . . between metaphysics, mountains, lakes, love inextinguishable, thoughts unutterable, and the nightmare of my own delinquencies.' The germ of *Manfred*, he said, was to be 'found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs. Leigh. . . .' When he wrote it, he explained, he had never read or heard of Marlowe's *Faustus*. Remorse is the keynote of the poem: the hero has committed a crime that he can never forget and never hope to expiate.

A DRAMATIC POEM

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MANFRED	WITCH OF THE ALPS
CHAMOIS HUNTER	ARIMANTS
ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE	NEMESIS
MANUEL	THE DESTINIES
HERMAN	SPIRITS, &c.

*The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—partly in the
Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.*

ACT I

SCENE I. MANFRED *alone.* *Scene, a Gothic Gallery. Time, Midnight.*

MANFRED: The lamp must be replenish'd, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch:
My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.

But grief should be the instructor of the wise;
Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essay'd, and in my mind there is
A power to make these subject to itself—
But they avail not: I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among men—
But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
But this avail'd not:—Good, or evil, life,
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the earth.
Now to my task.—

Mysterious agency!

Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe!
Whom I have sought in darkness and in light—
Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell
In subtler essence—ye, to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things—
I call upon ye by the written charm
Which gives me power upon you—Rise! Appear!

[A pause.

They come not yet—Now by the voice of him
Who is the first among you—by this sign,
Which makes you tremble—by the claims of him
Who is undying,—Rise! Appear!—Appear! [A pause.
If it be so—Spirits of earth and air,
Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birthplace in a star condemn'd,
The burning wreck of a demolish'd world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space;
By the strong curse which is upon my soul,

The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will—Appear!

*[A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery:
it is stationary; and a voice is heard singing.]*

FIRST SPIRIT

Mortal! to thy bidding bow'd,
From my mansion in the cloud,
Which the breath of twilight builds,
And the summer's sunset gilds
With the azure and vermillion,
Which is mix'd for my pavilion;
Though thy quest may be forbidden,
On a star-beam I have ridden:
To thine adjuration bow'd,
Mortal—be thy wish avow'd!

Voice of the SECOND SPIRIT

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;
They crown'd him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a diadem of snow,
Around his waist are forests braced,
The Avalanche in his hand;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass,
Or with its ice delay.
I am the spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his cavern'd base—
And what with me wouldst *Thou*?

Voice of the THIRD SPIRIT

In the blue depth of the waters,
Where the wave hath no strife,
Where the wind is a stranger,
And the sea-snake hath life,

Where the Mermaid is decking
Her green hair with shells,
Like the storm on the surface
Came the sound of thy spells;
O'er my calm Hall of Coral
The deep echo roll'd—
To the Spirit of Ocean
Thy wishes unfold!

FOURTH SPIRIT

Where the slumbering earthquake
Lies pillow'd on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen
Rise boilingly higher;
Where the roots of the Andes
Strike deep in the earth,
As their summits to heaven
Shoot soaringly forth;
I have quitted my birthplace,
Thy bidding to bide—
Thy spell hath subdued me,
Thy will be my guide!

FIFTH SPIRIT

I am the Rider of the wind,
The Stirrer of the storm;
The hurricane I left behind
Is yet with lightning warm;
To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast:
The fleet I met sail'd well, and yet
'Twill sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT

My dwelling is the shadow of the night,
Why doth thy magic torture me with light?

SEVENTH SPIRIT

The star which rules thy destiny
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
It was a world as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round sun in air;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosom'd not a lovelier star.
The hour arrived—and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe;
Still rolling on with unate force,
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky!
And thou! beneath its influence born—
Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—
Forced by a power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend,
Where these weak spirits round thee bend
And parley with a thing like thee—
What wouldst thou, Child of Clay! with me?

The SEVEN SPIRITS

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
Before thee at thy quest their spirits are—
What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals—say?

MANFRED: Forgetfulness—

FIRST SPIRIT: Of what—of whom—and why?

MANFRED: Of that which is within me; read it there—

Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

SPIRIT: We can but give thee that which we possess:

Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
O'er earth—the whole, or portion—or a sign
Which shall control the elements, whereof
We are the dominators,—each and all,
These shall be thine.

MANFRED: Oblivion, self-oblivion
Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely what I ask?

SPIRIT: It is not in our essence, in our skill;
But—thou may'st die.

MANFRED: Will death bestow it on me?

SPIRIT: We are immortal, and do not forget;
We are eternal; and to us the past
Is, as the future, present. Art thou answer'd?

MANFRED: Ye mock me—but the power which
brought ye here
Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!
The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!
Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

SPIRIT: We answer as we answer'd; our reply
Is even in thine own words.

MANFRED: Why say ye so?

SPIRIT: If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
We have replied in telling thee, the thing
Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

MANFRED: I then have call'd ye from your realms in
vain;

Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

SPIRIT: Say,
What we possess we offer; it is thine:
Bethink ere thou dismiss us; ask again;
Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days——

MANFRED: Accurs'd! what have I to do with days?
They are too long already.—Hence—begone!

SPIRIT: Yet pause: being here, our will would do
thee service;

Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?

MANFRED: No, none: yet stay—one moment, ere
we part,

I would behold ye face to face. I hear
Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,
As music on the waters; and I see
The steady aspect of a clear large star;

But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,
Or one, or all, in your accustom'd forms.

SPIRIT: We have no forms, beyond the elements
Of which we are the mind and principle:
But choose a form—in that we will appear.

MANFRED: I have no choice; there is no form on
earth

Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,
Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect
As unto him may seem most fitting—Come!

SEVENTH SPIRIT [*appearing in the shape of a beautiful
female figure*]: Behold!

MANFRED: Oh God! if it be thus, and thou
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy, I will clasp thee,
And we again will be——

[*The figure vanishes.*
My heart is crush'd!
[MANFRED falls senseless.

(*A voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.*)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish.
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather'd in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
For there it coil'd as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been pass'd—now wither!

SCENE II. *The Mountain of the Jungfrau. Time, Morning.*
MANFRED alone upon the Cliffs.

MANFRED: The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,
The remedy I reck'd of tortured me;
I lean no more on superhuman aid;
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulf'd in darkness,
It is not of my search—My mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;
I see the peril—yet do not recede;
And my brain reels—and yet my foot is firm:
There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live,—
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—

The last infirmity of evil. Ay,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,

[An eagle passes.]

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are—what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,

[The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.

The natural music of the mountain reed—
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable—pipes in the liberal air,
Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;
My soul would drink those echoes. Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a CHEAMOIS HUNTER.

CHAMOIS HUNTER:

Even so

This way the chamois leapt: her nimble feet
Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce
Repay my break-neck travail.—What is here?
Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reach'd
A height which none even of our mountaineers,
Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this distance:
I will approach him nearer.

MANFRED [*not perceiving the other*]: To be thus—
Grey-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,
Which but supplies a feeling to decay—
And to be thus, eternally but thus,
I having been otherwise! Now furrow'd o'er
With wrinkles, plough'd by moments,—not by years,—
And hours, all tortured into ages—hours
Which I outlive!—Ye toppling crags of ice!
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
And hamlet of the harmless villager.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: The mists begin to rise from up
the valley;
I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.

MANFRED: The mists boil up around the glaciers;
clouds
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore,
Heap'd with the damn'd like pebbles—I am giddy.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: I must approach him cautiously;
if near,
A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.

MANFRED: Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters;
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash,
Which crush'd the waters into mist and made
Their fountains find another channel—thus,
Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg—
Why stood I not beneath it?

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Friend! have a care,
Your next step may be fatal!—for the love

Of him who made you, stand not on that brink!

MANFRED [*not hearing him*]: Such would have been
for me a fitting tomb;

My bones had then been quiet in their depth;

They had not then been strewn upon the rocks

For the wind's pastime—as thus—thus they shall be—

In this one plunge.—Farewell, ye opening heavens!

Look not upon me thus reproachfully—

You were not meant for me—Earth! take these atoms!

[*As MANFRED is in act to spring from the cliff, the CHAMOIS*

HUNTER seizes and retains him with a sudden grasp.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Hold, madman!—though aweary
of thy life,

Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood:

Away with me—I will not quit my hold.

MANFRED: I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me
not—

I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl

Spinning around me—I grow blind—What art
thou?

CHAMOIS HUNTER: I'll answer that anon. Away with
me—

The clouds grow thicker—there—now lean on me—

Place your foot here—here, take this staff, and cling

A moment to that shrub—now give me your hand,

And hold fast by my girdle—softly—well—

The Chalet will be gain'd within an hour:

Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,

And something like a pathway, which the torrent

Hath wash'd since winter.—Come, 'tis bravely done—

You should have been a hunter.—Follow me.

[*As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the scene closes.*

ACT II

SCENE I. *A Cottage amongst the Bernese Alps.*

MANFRED *and the* CHAMOIS HUNTER.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: No, no—yet pause—thou must
not yet go forth:
Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other, for some hours, at least;
When thou art better, I will be thy guide—
But whither?

MANFRED: It imports not: I do know
My route full well, and need no further guidance.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of
high lineage—
One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys—which of these
May call thee lord? I only know their portals;
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,
Carousing with the vassals; but the paths,
Which step from out our mountains to their doors,
I know from childhood—which of these is thine?

MANFRED: No matter.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Well, sir, pardon me the
question,
And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;
'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
'T has thaw'd my veins among our glaciers, now
Let it do thus for thine—Come, pledge me fairly.

MANFRED: Away, away! there's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never—never sink in the earth?

CHAMOIS HUNTER: What dost thou mean? thy senses
wander from thee.

MANFRED: I say 'tis blood—my blood! the pure warm
stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed: but still it rises up,

Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not—and I shall never be.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Man of strange words, and some
half-maddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet—
The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience—

MANFRED: Patience and patience! Hence—that word
was made
For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,—
I am not of thine order.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Thanks to heaven!
I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill,
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.

MANFRED: Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: This is convulsion, and no healthful
life.

MANFRED: I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing now
To those which I must number: ages—ages—
Space and eternity—and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death—and still unslaked!

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Why, on thy brow the seal of middle
age
Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far.

MANFRED: Think'st thou existence doth depend on
time?

It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,
Innumerable atoms; and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Alas! he's mad—but yet I must
not leave him.

MANFRED: I would I were—for then the things I see
Would be but a distemper'd dream.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?

MANFRED: Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps—
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud, and free;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf,
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph;
This do I see—and then I look within—
It matters not—my soul was scorched already!

CHAMOIS HUNTER: And wouldst thou then exchange
thy lot for mine?

MANFRED: No, friend! I would not wrong thee, nor
exchange
My lot with living being: I can bear—
However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear—
In life what others could not brook to dream,
But perish in their slumber.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: And with this—
This cautious feeling for another's pain,
Canst thou be black with evil?—say not so.
Can one of gentle thoughts have wreak'd revenge
Upon his enemies?

MANFRED: Oh! no, no, no!
My injuries came down on those who loved me—
On those whom I best loved: I never quell'd
An enemy, save in my just defence—
But my embrace was fatal.

CHAMOIS HUNTER: Heaven give thee rest!
And penitence restore thee to thyself;
My prayers shall be for thee.

MANFRED: I need them not—
But can endure thy pity. I depart—
'Tis time—farewell!—Here's gold, and thanks for thee—
No words—it is thy due.—Follow me not—
I know my path—the mountain peril's past:
And once again I charge thee, follow not!

[Exit MANFRED.]

SCENE II. *A lower Valley in the Alps. A Cataract.*

Enter MANFRED.

It is not noon—the sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse. No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.—I will call her.

[MANFRED takes some of the water into the palm of his hand, and flings it into the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the WITCH OF THE ALPS rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of earth's least mortal daughters grow
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements; while the hues of youth,—
Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her heaven,—
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them—if that he
Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.

WITCH: Son of Earth!
I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;

I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this—what wouldst thou with me?

MANFRED: To look upon thy beauty—nothing further.
The face of the earth hath madden'd me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her—
But they can nothing aid me. I have sought
From them what they could not bestow, and now
I search no further.

WITCH: What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful,
The rulers of the invisible?

MANFRED: A boon;
But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

WITCH: I know not that; let thy lips utter it.

MANFRED: Well, though it torture me, 'tis but the same;
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
Was there but one who—but of her anon.
I said with men, and with the thoughts of men,
I held but slight communion; but instead,
My joy was in the wilderness,—to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.
In these my early strength exulted; or
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
Or to look, list'ning, on the scatter'd leaves,

While Autumn winds were at their evening song.
These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
For if the beings, of whom I was one,—
Hating to be so,—cross'd me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,
Searching its cause in its effect; and drew
From wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd
The nights of years in sciences untaught,
Save in the old time; and with time and toil,
And terrible ordeal, and such penance
As in itself hath power upon the air,
And spirits that do compass air and earth,
Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros, at Gadara,
As I do thee;—and with my knowledge grew
The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy
Of this most bright intelligence, until—

WITCH: Proceed.

MANFRED: Oh! I but thus prolong'd my words,
Boasting these idle attributes, because
As I approach the core of my heart's grief—
But to my task. I have not named to thee
Father or mother, mistress, friend, or being,
With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
If I had such, they seem'd not such to me;
Yet there was one—

WITCH: Spare not thyself—proceed.

MANFRED: She was like me in lineaments; her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But soften'd all, and temper'd into beauty:
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe: nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
Pity, and smiles, and tears—which I had not;

WITCH: It may be
That I can aid thee.

MANFRED: To do this thy power
Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
Do so—in any shape—in any hour—
With any torture—so it be the last.

WITCH: That is not in my province; but if thou
Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

MANFRED: I will not swear—Obey! and whom? the
spirits

Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me—Never!

WITCH: Is this all?
Hast thou no gentler answer?—Yet bethink thee,
And pause ere thou rejectest.

MANFRED: I have said it.

WITCH: Enough! I may retire then—say!

MANFRED: Retire!

[*The WITCH disappears.*]

MANFRED [*alone*]: We are the fools of time and terror:

Days

Steal on us, and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke—
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
In all the days of past and future, for
In life there is no present, we can number
How few—how less than few—wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science—I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be:
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing. If they answer not—
The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer and his destiny—he slew

That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardon'd—though he call'd in aid
The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance—she replied
In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.
If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful,
Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
What is she now?—a sufferer for my sins—
A thing I dare not think upon—or nothing
Within few hours I shall not call in vain—
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
Until this hour I never shrink to gaze
On spirit, good or evil—now I tremble,
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart.
But I can act even what I most abhor,
And champion human fears.—The night approaches.
[Exit.

SCENE III. *The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.*

Enter FIRST DESTINY.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and bright;
And here on snows, where never human foot
Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
And leave no traces: o'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
Frozen in a moment—a dead whirlpool's image:
And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fretwork of some earthquake—where the clouds
Pause to repose themselves in passing by—
Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils;
Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
To the Hall of Arimanes, for to-night
Is our great festival—'tis strange they come not.

A Voice without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,
Hurl'd down from the throne,
Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone;
I broke through his slumbers,
I shiver'd his chain,
I leagued him with numbers—
He's Tyrant again!
With the blood of a million he'll answer my care,
With a nation's destruction—his flight and despair.

Second Voice, without.

The ship sail'd on, the ship sail'd fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was a subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea—
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!

FIRST DESTINY, answering.

The city lies sleeping;
The morn, to deplore it,
May dawn on it weeping:
Sullenly, slowly,
The black plague flew o'er it—
Thousands lie lowly;
Tens of thousands shall perish;
The living shall fly from
The sick they should cherish;
But nothing can vanquish
The touch that they die from.
Sorrow and anguish,
And evil and dread,
Envelope a nation;
The blest are the dead,

Who see not the sight
Of their own desolation;
This work of a night—
This wreck of a realm—this deed of my doing—
For ages I've done, and shall still be renewing!

Enter the SECOND and THIRD DESTINIES.

The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
Our footsteps are their graves;
We only give to take again
The spirits of our slaves!

FIRST DESTINY: Welcome!—Where's Nemesis?

SECOND DESTINY: At some great work;
But what I know not, for my hands were full.

THIRD DESTINY: Behold she cometh.

Enter NEMESIS.

FIRST DESTINY: Say, where hast thou been?
My sisters and thyself are slow to-night.

NEMESIS: I was detain'd repairing shatter'd thrones,
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away!
We have outstay'd the hour—mount we our clouds!

[Exeunt]

SCENE IV. *The Hall of Arimanes. Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits.*

Hymn of the SPIRITS.

Hail to our Master!—Prince of Earth and Air!
Who walks the clouds and waters—in his hand
The sceptre of the elements, which tear
Themselves to chaos at his high command!
He breatheth—and a tempest shakes the sea;
He speaketh—and the clouds reply in thunder;
He gazeth—from his glance the sunbeams flee;
He moveth—earthquakes rend the world asunder.
Beneath his footsteps the volcanoes rise;
His shadow is the Pestilence; his path
The comets herald through the crackling skies;
And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.
To him War offers daily sacrifice;
To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,
With all its infinite of agonies—
And his the spirit of whatever is!

Enter the DESTINIES and NEMESIS.

FIRST DESTINY: Glory to Arimanes! on the earth
His power increaseth—both my sisters did
His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!

SECOND DESTINY: Glory to Arimanes! we who bow
The necks of men, bow down before his throne!

THIRD DESTINY: Glory to Arimanes! we await
His nod!

NEMESIS: Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,
And we are vigilant. The late commands
Have been fulfill'd to the utmost.

Enter MANFRED.

A SPIRIT: What is here?
A mortal!—Thou most rash and fatal wretch,
Bow down and worship!

SECOND SPIRIT: I do know the man—
A Magian of great power, and fearful skill!
THIRD SPIRIT: Bow down and worship, slave!—
What, know'st thou not
Thine and our Sovereign?—Tremble, and obey!
ALL THE SPIRITS: Prostrate thyself, and thy condemned
clay,
Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.
MANFRED: I know it;
And yet ye see I kneel not.
FOURTH SPIRIT: 'Twill be taught thee.
MANFRED: 'Tis taught already;—many a night on
the earth,
On the bare ground, have I bow'd down my face,
And strew'd my head with ashes; I have known
The fulness of humiliation, for
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation.
FIFTH SPIRIT: Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not
The terror of his glory?—Crouch, I say.
MANFRED: Bid *him* bow down to that which is above
him,
The overruling Infinite—the Maker
Who made him not for worship—let him kneel,
And we will kneel together.
THE SPIRITS: Crush the worm!
Tear him in pieces!—
FIRST DESTINY: Hence! avaunt!—he's mine.
Prince of the Powers invisible! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote; his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge, and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know—
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that

Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all—the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
Have pierced his heart, and in their consequence
Made him a thing which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be; be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his—or power upon his soul.

NEMESIS: What doth he here then?

FIRST DESTINY: Let him answer that.

MANFRED: Ye know what I have known; and without
power

I could not be amongst ye: but there are
Powers deeper still beyond—I come in quest
Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

NEMESIS: What wouldst thou?

MANFRED: Thou canst not reply to me.
Call up the dead—my question is for them.

NEMESIS: Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch
The wishes of this mortal?

ARIMANES: Yea.

NEMESIS: Whom wouldst thou
Uncharnel?

MANFRED: One without a tomb—call up Astarte.

NEMESIS

Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay,
Which return'd to the earth,
Re-appear to the day!
Bear what thou borest,
The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou worst
Redeem from the worm.

Appear!—Appear!—Appear!

Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[*The Phantom of ASTARTE rises and stands in the midst.*]

MANFRED: Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek;

But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red
Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.
It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread
To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,
I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
Forgive me or condemn me.

NEMESIS

By the power which hath broken
The grave which enthrall'd thee,
Speak to him, who hath spoken,
Or those who have call'd thee!

MANFRED: She is silent,
And in that silence I am more than answer'd.

NEMESIS: My power extends no further. Prince or Air!
It rests with thee alone—command her voice.

ARIMANES: Spirit—obey this sceptre!

NEMESIS: Silent still!
She is not of our order, but belongs
To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
And we are baffled also.

MANFRED: Hear me, hear me—
Astarte! my beloved! speak to me:
I have so much endured—so much endure—
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be
One of the blessed—and that I shall die;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence—in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality—

A future like the past. I cannot rest.
 I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
 I feel but what thou art, and what I am;
 And I would hear yet once before I perish
 The voice which was my music—Speak to me!
 For I have call'd on thee in the still night,
 Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,
 And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
 Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
 Which answer'd me—many things answer'd me—
 Spirits and men—but thou wert silent all.
 Yet speak to me! I have outwatch'd the stars,
 And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
 Speak to me! I have wander'd o'er the earth,
 And never found thy likeness—Speak to me!
 Look on the fiends around—they feel for me:
 I fear them not, and feel for thee alone—
 Speak to me! though it be in wrath;—but say—
 I reck not what—but let me hear thee once—
 This once—once more!

PHANTOM OF ASTARTE: Manfred!

MANFRED: Say on, say on—
 I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!
 PHANTOM: Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
 Farewell!

MANFRED: Yet one word more—am I forgiven?

PHANTOM: Farewell!

MANFRED: Say, shall we meet again?

PHANTOM: Farewell!

MANFRED: One word for mercy! Say, thou lovest me.

PHANTOM: Manfred!

[*The Spirit of ASTARTE disappears.*]

NEMESIS: She's gone, and will not be recall'd;
 Her words will be fulfill'd. Return to the earth.

A SPIRIT: He is convulsed.—This is to be a mortal
 And seek the things beyond mortality.

ANOTHER SPIRIT: Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and
 makes

His torture tributary to his will.
 Had he been one of us, he would have made
 An awful spirit.

NEMESIS: Hast thou further question
Of our great sovereign, or his worshippers?

MANFRED: None.

NEMESIS: Then, for a time, farewell.

MANFRED: We meet then! Where? On the earth?—
Even as thou wilt: and for the grace accorded
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well! [Exit MANFRED.
(Scene closes.)

ACT III

SCENE I. *A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.*

MANFRED and HERMAN.

MANFRED: What is the hour?

HERMAN: It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

MANFRED: Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

HERMAN: All, my lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.

MANFRED: It is well: [Exit HERMAN.
Thou may'st retire.

MANFRED [*alone*]: There is a calm upon me—
Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,
The merest word that ever fool'd the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
The golden secret, the sought 'Kalon', found,
And seated in my soul. It will not last,
But it is well to have known it, though but once:
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
And I within my tablets would note down
That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

Re-enter HERMAN.

HERMAN: My lord, the abbot of St. Maurice craves
To greet your presence.

Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.

ABBOT: Peace be with Count Manfred!

MANFRED: Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.

ABBOT: Would it were so, Count!—
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

MANFRED: Herman, retire.—What would my reverend
guest?

ABBOT: Thus, without prelude:—Age and zeal, my office,
And good intent, must plead my privilege;
Our near, though not acquainted neighbourhood,
May also be my herald. Rumours strange,
And of unholy nature, are abroad,
And busy with thy name: a noble name
For centuries: may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpair'd!

MANFRED: Proceed,—I listen.

ABBOT: 'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man:
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the shade of death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

MANFRED: And what are they who do avouch these
things?

ABBOT: My pious brethren—the scared peasantry—
Even thy own vassals—who do look on thee
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril.

MANFRED: Take it.

ABBOT: I come to save, and not destroy:
I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity: reconcile thee
With the true church, and through the church to heaven.

MANFRED: I hear thee. This is my reply: whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself. I shall not choose a mortal

To be my mediator. Have I sinn'd
Against your ordinances? prove and punish!

ABBOT: My son! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon;—with thyself
The choice of such remains—and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smoothe the path from sin
To higher hope and better thoughts; the first
I leave to heaven,—‘Vengeance is mine alone!’
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

MANFRED: Old man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,
Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of hell,
But all in all sufficient to itself
Would make a hell of heaven—can exorcise
From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
Upon itself; there is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd
He deals on his own soul.

ABBOT: All this is well;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
With calm assurance to that blessed place,
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be atoned:
And the commencement of atonement is
The sense of its necessity. Say on—
And all our church can teach thee shall be taught;
And all we can absolve thee shall be pardon'd.

MANFRED: When Rome's sixth emperor was near his last,
The victim of a self-inflicted wound,
To shun the torments of a public death
From senates once his slaves, a certain soldier,
With show of loyal pity, would have stanch'd
The gushing throat with his officious robe;
The dying Roman thrust him back, and said—

Some empire still in his expiring glance—
'It is too late—is this fidelity?'

ABBOT: And what of this?

MANFRED: I answer with the Roman—
'It is too late!'

ABBOT: It never can be so,
To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with heaven. Hast thou no hope?
'Tis strange—even those who do despair above,
Yet shape themselves some fantasy on earth,
To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

MANFRED: Ay—father! I have had those earthly visions,
And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my own the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I knew not whither—it might be to fall;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,
Which having leapt from its more dazzling height,
Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,
(Which casts up misty columns that become
Clouds raining from the re-ascended skies,)
Lies low but mighty still.—But this is past,
My thoughts mistook themselves.

ABBOT: And wherefore so?

MANFRED: I could not tame my nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway; and soothe, and sue,
And watch all time, and pry into all place,
And be a living lie, who would become
A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such
The mass are; I disdain'd to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I.

ABBOT: And why not live and act with other men?

MANFRED: Because my nature was averse from life;
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find a desolation. Like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone simoom,
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
But being met is deadly,—such hath been

The course of my existence; but there came
Things in my path which are no more.

ABBOT:

Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling; yet so young,
I still would—

MANFRED: Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure, some of study,
Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness,
Some of disease, and some insanity,
And some of wither'd or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady, which slays
More than are number'd in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken; and of all these things,
One were enough; then wonder 'not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,
Or having been, that I am still on earth.

ABBOT: Yet, hear me still—

MANFRED:

Old man! I do respect

Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain:
Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,
Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy—and so—farewell. [Exit MANFRED.]

ABBOT: This should have been a noble creature: he
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts
Mix'd, and contending without end or order.—
All dormant or destructive: he will perish,
And yet he must not; I will try once more.
For such are worth redemption; and my duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end.
I'll follow him—but cautiously, though surely.

[Exit ABBOT.]

SCENE II. *Another Chamber.*

MANFRED and HERMAN.

HERMAN: My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset:
He sinks behind the mountain.

MANFRED: Doth he so?
I will look on him.

[MANFRED advances to the window of the Hall.

Glorious Orb! the idol

Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons
Of the embrace of angels, with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring spirits who can ne'er return.—
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was reveal'd!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown—
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star!
Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects;—thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look; thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature. He is gone:
I follow.

[Exit MANFRED.]

SCENE III. *The Mountains. The Castle of Manfred at some distance. A Terrace before a Tower. Time, Twilight.*

HERMAN, MANUEL, and other Dependants of MANFRED.

HERMAN: 'Tis strange enough; night after night, for years,
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it,—
So have we all been oft-times; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute, of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter: I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years,
To pore upon its mysteries.

MANUEL: 'Twere dangerous;
Content thyself with what thou know'st already.

HERMAN: Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle—
How many years is't?

MANUEL: Ere Count Manfred's birth,
I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

HERMAN: There be more sons in like predicament.
But wherein do they differ?

MANUEL: I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits;
Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and free,—
A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

HERMAN: Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

MANUEL: These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.

HERMAN: Come, be friendly;
Relate me some to while away our watch:

I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happen'd hereabouts, by this same tower.

MANUEL: That was a night indeed! I do remember
'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such
Another evening;—yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then,—
So like that it might be the same; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing moon;
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower,—
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings—her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seem'd to love,—
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The lady Astarte, his—

Hush! who comes here?

Enter the ABBOT.

ABBOT: Where is your master?

HERMAN: Yonder in the tower.

ABBOT: I must speak with him.

MANUEL: 'Tis impossible;
He is most private, and must not be thus
Intruded on.

ABBOT: Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be—
But I must see him.

HERMAN: Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.

ABBOT: Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprise the Count of my approach.

HERMAN: We dare not.

ABBOT: Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.

MANUEL: Reverend father, stop—
I pray you pause.

ABBOT: Why so?

MANUEL: But step this way,
And I will tell you further.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. *Interior of the Tower.*MANFRED *alone.*

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the Night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering,—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall,
'Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsars' palace came
The owl's long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot. Where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;
But the gladiators' bloody Circus stands,
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection,
While Cæsar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er

With silent worship of the great of old,—
The dead but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns.

'Twas such a night!
'Tis strange that I recall it at this time;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the ABBOT.

ABBOT: My good lord!
I crave a second grace for this approach;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness—all it hath of ill
Recoils on me; its good in the effect
May light upon your head—could I say *heart*—
Could I touch *that*, with words or prayers, I should
Recall a noble spirit which hath wander'd;
But is not yet all lost.

MANFRED: Thou know'st me not;
My days are number'd, and my deeds recorded:
Retire, or 'twill be dangerous—Away!

ABBOT: Thou dost not mean to menace me?

MANFRED: Not I;
I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
And would preserve thee.

ABBOT: What dost thou mean?

MANFRED: Look there!
What dost thou see?

ABBOT: Nothing.

MANFRED: Look there I say.
And steadfastly;—now tell me what thou seest?

ABBOT: That which should shake me, but I fear it not:
I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form
Robed as with angry clouds: he stands between
Thyself and me—but I do fear him not.

MANFRED: Thou hast no cause—he shall not harm
thee—but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy.
I say to thee—Retire!

ABBOT: And I reply—
Never—till I have battled with this fiend:—
What doth he here?

MANFRED: Why—ay—what doth he here?
I did not send for him,—he is unbidden.

ABBOT: Alas! lost mortal! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?
Ah! he unveils his aspect: on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven: from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell—
Avaunt!—

MANFRED: Pronounce—what is thy mission?

SPIRIT: Come!

ABBOT: What art thou, unknown being? answer!—
speak!

SPIRIT: The genius of this mortal.—Come! 'tis time.

MANFRED: I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me. Who sent thee here?

SPIRIT: Thou'lt know anon—Come! come!

MANFRD: I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than thine,
And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!

SPIRIT: Mortal! thine hour is come—Away! I say.

MANFRED: I knew, and know my hour is come, but
not

To render up my soul to such as thee:
Away! I'll die as I have lived—alone.

SPIRIT: Then I must summon up my brethren.—Rise!
[Other Spirits rise up.]

ABBOT: Avaunt! ye evil ones!— Avaunt! I say;
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name——

SPRIT: Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.
Once more I summon him—Away! Away!

MANFRED: I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly strength

To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

SPIRIT: Reluctant mortal!
Is this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal? Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? the very life
Which made thee wretched!

MANFRED: Thou false fiend, thou liest!
My life is in its last hour,—*that* I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour;
I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power,
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science—penance, daring,
And length of watching, strength of mind, and skill
In knowledge of our fathers—when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand
Upon my strength—I do defy—deny—
Spurn back, and scorn ye!—

SPIRIT: But thy many crimes
Have made thee——

MANFRED: What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punish'd but by other crimes,
And greater criminals?—Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine:
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,—
Is its own origin of ill and end—
And its own place and time: its innate sense,
When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt
me;

I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
But was my own destroyer, and will be

My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends!—
The hand of death is on me—but not yours!

[*The Demons disappear.*]

ABBOT: Alas! how pale thou art—thy lips are white—
And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasping throat
The accents rattle: Give thy prayers to heaven—
Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus.

MANFRED: 'Tis over—my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well!
Give me thy hand.

ABBOT: Cold—cold—even to the heart—
But yet one prayer—Alas! how fares it with thee?

MANFRED: Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die.

[*MANFRED expires.*]

ABBOT: He's gone—his soul hath ta'en its earthless
flight;
Whither? I dread to think—but he is gone.

The Vision of Judgment

An attack both on the 'renegade' Southey, whose 'epic' appearance Byron had admired at Holland House, and on the entire Tory faction, *The Vision of Judgment* was published in the first number of the ill-fated *Liberal*, October 15th, 1822. Byron's indignation had first been aroused when he heard that Southey had helped to spread scandalous reports about his life in Switzerland. Southey denied the charge, but attacked his fellow poet as the leader of the 'Satanic School'; whereupon Byron produced this brilliant parody of Southey's *Vision of Judgment*, published in April 1821, a patriotic effusion which paid tribute to the virtues of George III and celebrated the Divine Right of Kings.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

BY

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS

SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO ENTITLED
BY THE AUTHOR OF 'WAT TYLER'

'A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.'

PREFACE

It hath been wisely said, that 'One fool makes many'; and it hath been poetically observed—

'That fools rush in where angels fear to tread.'—POPE.

If Mr. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot, by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be *worse*. The gross flattery, the dull impudence, the renegade intolerance, and impious cant, of the poem by the author of 'Wat Tyler,' are something so stupendous as to form the sublime of himself—containing the quintessence of his own attributes.

So much for his poem—a word on his preface. In this preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed 'Satanic School,' the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature; thereby adding

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to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. If there exists anywhere, except in his imagination, such a School, is he not sufficiently armed against it by his own intense vanity? The truth is, that there are certain writers whom Mr. S. imagines, like Scrub, to have 'talked of him; for they laughed consumedly.'

I think I know enough of most of the writers to whom he is supposed to allude, to assert, that they, in their individual capacities, have done more good, in the charities of life, to their fellow-creatures, in any one year, than Mr. Southey has done harm to himself by his absurdities in his whole life, and this is saying a great deal. But I have a few questions to ask.

1stly, Is Mr. Southey the author of 'Wat Tyler'?

2ndly, Was he not refused a remedy at law by the highest judge of his beloved England, because it was a blasphemous and seditious publication?

3rdly, Was he not entitled by William Smith, in full parliament, 'a raucorous renegade'?

4thly, Is he not poet laureate, with his own lines on Martin the regicide staring him in the face?

And 5thly, Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare he call the attention of the laws to the publication of others, be they what they may?

I say nothing of the cowardice of such a proceeding, its meanness speaks for itself; but I wish to touch upon the *motive*, which is neither more nor less than that Mr. S. has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of yore in the 'Anti-jacobin,' by his present patrons. Hence all this 'skinble-scamble stuff' about 'Satanic,' and so forth. However, it is worthy of him—*'qualis ab inepto.'*

If there is anything obnoxious to the political opinions of a portion of the public in the following poem, they may thank Mr. Southey. He might have written hexameters, as he has written everything else, for aught that the writer cared—had they been upon another subject. But to attempt to canonize a monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriot king,—inasmuch as several years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France,—like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition. In whatever manner he may be spoken of in this new 'Vision,' his *public* career will not be more favourably transmitted by history. Of his *private* virtues (although a little expensive to the nation) there can be no doubt.

With regard to the supernatural personages treated of, I can only say that I know as much about them, and (as an honest man) have a better right to talk of them than Robert Southey. I have also treated them more tolerantly. The way in which that poor insane creature, the Laureate, deals about his judgments in the next world, is like his own judgment in this. If it was not completely ludicrous, it would be something worse. I don't think that there is much more to say at present.

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

PS.—It is possible that some readers may object, in these objectionable times, to the freedom with which saints, angels, and spiritual persons discourse in this 'Vision.' But, for precedents upon such points, I must refer him to Fielding's 'Journey from this World to the next,' and to the Visions of myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed, that the person

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

of the Deity is carefully withheld from sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not 'like a school-divine,' but like the unscholarlike Mr. Southey. The whole action passes on the outside of heaven; and Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath,' Pulci's 'Morgante Maggiore,' Swift's 'Tale of a Tub,' and the other works above referred to, are cases in point of the freedom with which saints, etc. may be permitted to converse in works not intended to be serious.

Q. R.

* * Mr. Southey being, as he says, a good Christian and vindictive, threatens, I understand, a reply to this our answer. It is to be hoped that his visionary faculties will in the mean time have acquired a little more judgment, properly so called: otherwise he will get himself into new dilemmas. These apostate jacobins furnish rich rejoinders. Let him take a specimen. Mr. Southey laudeth grievously 'one Mr. Landor,' who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses; and not long ago, the poet laureate dedicated to him, it appeareth, one of his fugitive lyrics, upon the strength of a poem called 'Gebir.' Who could suppose, that in this same Gebir the aforesaid Savage Landor (for such is his grim cognomen) putteth into the infernal regions no less a person than the hero of his friend Mr. Southey's heaven,—yea, even George the Third! See also how personal Savage becometh, when he hath a mind. The following is his portrait of our late gracious sovereign:

(Prince Gebir having descended into the infernal regions, the shades of his royal ancestors are, at his request, called up to his view; and he exclaims to his ghostly guide)—

'Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
Is that with cymbrows white and slanting brow?
Listen! him yonder who, bound down supine,
Shrinks yelling from that sword there, engine-hung.
He too amongst my ancestors! I hate
The despot, but the dastard I despise.
Was he our countryman?'

'Alas, O king!
Iberia bore him, but the breed accurst
Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east.'
'He was a warrior then, nor fear'd the gods?'
'Gebir, he fear'd the demons, not the gods,
Though them indeed his daily face adored;
And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives
Squander'd, as stones to exercise a sling,
And the tame cruelty and cold caprice—
Oh madness of mankind! address'd, adored!'

GEBIR, p. 28.

I omit noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of 'great moral lessons' are apt to be found in strange company.

I

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:

His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late;

Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era 'eighty-eight'

The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And 'a pull altogether,' as they say
At sea—which drew most souls another way.

2

The angels all were singing out of tune,

And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,

Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er th' ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

3

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,

Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky

Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply

With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

4

His business so augmented of late years,

That he was forced, against his will no doubt,
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers,)

For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,

To aid him ere he should be quite worn out
By the increased demand for his remarks:
Six angels and twelve saints were named his clerks.

5

This was a handsome board—at least for heaven;
 And yet they had even then enough to do,
 So many conquerors' cars were daily driven,
 So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
 Each day too slew its thousands six or seven,
 Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
 They threw their pens down in divine disgust—
 The page was so besmear'd with blood and dust.

6

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
 What angels shrink from: even the very devil
 On this occasion his own work abhorr'd,
 So surfeited with the infernal revel:
 Though he himself had sharpen'd every sword,
 It almost quench'd his innate thirst of evil.
 (Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion—
 'Tis, that he has both generals in reversion.)

7

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
 Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont,
 And heaven none—they form the tyrant's lease,
 With nothing but new names subscribed upon't;
 'Twill one day finish: meantime they increase,
 'With seven heads and ten horns,' and all in front,
 Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours are born
 Less formidable in the head than horn.

8

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
 Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
 Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
 Left him nor mental nor external sun:
 A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from lawn,
 A worse king never left a realm undone!
 He died—but left his subjects still behind,
 One half as mad—and t'other no less blind.

9

He died! his death made no great stir on earth:
His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
Of aught but tears—save those shed by collusion.
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion—
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

10

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flock'd to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe.
There throb'd not there a thought which pierced the
pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

11

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it *must* far sooner, were
The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What nature made him at his birth, as bare
As the mere million's base unummied clay—
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

12

He's dead—and upper earth with him has done;
He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will:
But where's the proctor who will ask his son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

13

'God save the king!' It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

14

I know this is unpopular; I know
'Tis blasphemous; I know one may be damn'd
For hoping no one else may e'er be so;
I know my catechism; I know we're cram'm'd
With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow;
I know that all save England's church have sham'm'd,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a *damn'd* bad purchase.

15

God help us all! God help me too! I am,
God knows, as helpless as the devil can wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damn,
Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost everybody born to die.

16

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys; when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late—
A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

In short; a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, 'There's another star gone out, I think!'

17

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his eyes—
At which St. Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd his nose:
'Saint porter,' said the angel, 'prithee rise!
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes:
To which the saint replied, 'Well, what's the matter?
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?'

18

'No,' quoth the cherub; 'George the Third is dead.'
'And who *is* George the Third?' replied the apostle:
'*What* George? *what* Third?' 'The king of England,' said
The angel. 'Well! he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way; but does he wear his head?
Because the last we saw here had a tustle,
And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our faces.'

19

'He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
A claim to those of martyrs—like my own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my *keys*, and not my brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his hand.'

20

'And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the saints came out and took him in;
And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by jowl;
That fellow Paul—the parvenu! The skin

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of St. Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd his sin.
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head.

21

'But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
There would have been a different tale to tell:
The fellow-feeling in the saint's beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell,
And so this very foolish head heaven solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.'

22

The angel answer'd, 'Peter! do not pout:
The king who comes has head and all entire,
And never knew much what it was about—
He did as doth the puppet—by its wire,
And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt:
My business and your own is not to inquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue—
Which is to act as we are bid to do.'

23

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow traveller on a cloud.

24

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

His brow was like the deep when tempest-toss'd;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

25

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself within;
He patter'd with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

26

The very cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And form'd a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce knew whither
His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many storics,
And true, we learn the angels all are Torics).

27

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-colour'd flame, until its tinges
Reach'd even our speck of earth, and made a new
Aurora borcalis spread its fringes
O'er the North Pole; the same seen, when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in 'Melville's Sound.'

28

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight:

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving.

29

'Twas the archangel Michael; all men know
The make of angels and archangels, since
There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels' prince;
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain *their* merits.

30

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all glory
And good arise; the portal past—he stood;
Before him the young cherubs and saints hoary—
(I say *young*, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very sorry
To state, they were not older than St. Peter,
But merely that they seem'd a little sweeter).

31

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down before
That arch-angelic hierarch, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
No thought, save for his Master's service, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

32

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—
They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their 'champ clos' the spheres.

33

But here they were in neutral space: we know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that the 'sons of God,' like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil—but 'twould take up hours.

34

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative; and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

35

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of heaven; like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
And souls despatch'd to that world or to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There pass'd a mutual glance of great politeness.

36

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful Oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

He turn'd as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

37

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
Who long have 'paved hell with their good intentions.'

38

Michael began: 'What wouldst thou with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just: if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine; if not, let him have way.'

39

'Michael!' replied the Prince of Air, 'even here,
Before the Gate of him thou servest, must
I claim my subject: and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

40

'Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine*; it was,
Once, *more* thy master's: but I triumph not
In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their kings,—

41

'And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord: and even had
I such an inclination, 'twere (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

42

'Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,
And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of ocean call'd him king: through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time;
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

43

'He came to his sceptre young; he leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

44

''Tis true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amass'd
Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsar's school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.

45

'He ever warr'd with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"
Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

46

'I know he was a constant consort; own
He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown:
I grant him all the kindest can accord;
And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what oppression chose.

47

'The New World shook him off; the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him—his tame virtues; drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

48

'Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old,—
Freedom to worship—not alone your Lord;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not abhorr'd
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

49

'True! he allow'd them to pray God; but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the same base
With those who did not hold the saints in awe.'
But here Saint Peter started from his place,
And cried, 'You may the prisoner withdraw:
Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damn'd myself!

50

'Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
The azure fields of heaven, of that be sure!
'Saint!' replied Satan, 'you do well to avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
And if to this exchange you should be given,
I'll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven!'

51

Here Michael interposed: 'Good saint! and devil!
Pray, not so fast; you both outrun discretion.
Saint Peter! you were wont to be more civil!
Satan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
And condescension to the vulgar's level:
Even saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
Have you got more to say?'—'No.'—'If you please,
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses.'

52

Then Satan turn'd and waved his swarthy hand,
Which stirr'd with its electric qualities
Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in our skies;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
In all the planets, and hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

53

This was a signal unto such damn'd souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controls
Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,
They may range freely—being damn'd the same.

54

They're proud of this—as very well they may,
It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key
Stuck in their loins; or like to an 'entré'
Up the back stairs, or such freemasonry.
I borrow my comparisons from clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be
Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

55

When the great signal ran from heaven to hell—
About ten million times the distance reckon'd
From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London, through which, dimly beacon'd,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a year,
If that the *summer* is not too severe:

56

I say that I can tell—'twas half a minute;
I know the solar beams take up more time.
Ere, pack'd up for their journey, they begin it;
But then their telegraph is less sublime,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And if they ran a race, they would not win it
'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their own clime.
The sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its goal—the devil not half a day.

57

Upon the verge of space, about the size
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear'd
(I've seen a something like it in the skies
In the Ægean, ere a squall); it near'd,
And, growing bigger, took another guise;
Like an acrial ship it tack'd, and steer'd,
Or *was* steer'd (I am doubtful of the grammar
Of the last phrase, which makes the stanza stammer;—

58

But take your choice): and then it grew a cloud;
And so it was—a cloud of witnesses.
But such a cloud! No land e'er saw a crowd
Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw these;
They shadow'd with their myriads space: their loud
And varied cries were like those of wild geese
(If nations may be liken'd to a goose),
And realised the phrase of 'hell broke loose.'

59

Here crash'd a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
Who damn'd away his eyes as heretofore:
There Paddy brogued 'By Jasus!'—'What's your wull?'
The temperate Scot exclaim'd: the French ghost swore
In certain terms I shan't translate in full,
As the first coachman will; and 'midst the war,
The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
'Our president is going to war, I guess.'

60

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
In short, an universal shoal of shades,
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,

Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
 Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
 All summon'd by this grand 'subpoena,' to
 Try if kings mayn't be damn'd like me or you.

61

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
 As angels can; next, like Italian twilight,
 He turn'd all colours—as a peacock's tail,
 Of sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
 In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
 Or distant lightning on the horizon by night,
 Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
 Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue.

62

Then he address'd himself to Satan: 'Why—
 My good old friend, for such I deem you, though
 Our different parties make us fight so shy,
 I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe;
 Our difference is *political*, and I
 Trust that, whatever may occur below,
 You know my great respect for you: and this
 Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss—

63

'Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
 My call for witnesses? I did not mean
 That you should half of earth and hell produce;
 'Tis even superfluous, since two honest, clean,
 True testimonies are enough: we lose
 Our time, nay, our eternity, between
 The accusation and defence: if we
 Hear both, 'twill stretch our immortality.'

64

Satan replied, 'To me the matter is
 Indifferent, in a personal point of view:
 I can have fifty better souls than this
 With far less trouble than we have gone through

Already; and I merely argued his
Late majesty of Britain's case with you
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I've kings enough below, God knows!

65

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd 'multifaced'
By multo-scribbling Southey). 'Then we'll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed
Around our congress, and dispense with all
The rest,' quoth Michael: 'Who may be so graced
As to speak first? there's choice enough—who shall
It be?' Then Satan answer'd, 'There are many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any.'

66

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite
Upon the instant started from the throng,
Dress'd in a fashion now forgotten quite;
For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
By people in the next world; where unite
All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

67

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
Assembled, and exclaim'd, 'My friends of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;
So let's to business: why this general call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
And 'tis for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?'

68

'Sir,' replied Michael, 'you mistake; these things
Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met: so now you know.'

'Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,'
Said Wilkes, 'are cherubs; and that soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?'

69

'He is what you behold him, and his doom
Depends upon his deeds,' the Angel said;
'If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
Gives licence to the humblest beggar's head
To lift itself against the loftiest.'—'Some,'
Said Wilkes, 'don't wait to see them laid in lead,
For such a liberty—and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun.'

70

'Above the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
To urge against him,' said the Archangel. 'Why,'
Replied the spirit, 'since old scores are past,
Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
With all his Lords and Commons: in the sky
I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.'

71

'Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punish'd here for their excess,
Since they were both damn'd long ago, and still in
Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his "habeas corpus" into heaven.'

72

'Wilkes,' said the Devil, 'I understand all this;
You turn'd to half a courtier ere you died,
And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side'

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of Charon's ferry; you forget that *his*
Reign is concluded; whatsoe'er betide,
He won't be sovereign more: you've lost your labour,
For at the best he will but be your neighbour.

73

'However, I knew what to think of it,
When I beheld you in your jesting way,
Flitting and whispering round about the spit
Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox's lard was basting William Pitt,
His pupil; I knew what to think, I say:
That fellow even in hell breeds farther ills;
I'll have him *gagg'd*—'twas one of his own bills.

74

'Call Junius!' From the crowd a shadow stalk'd,
And at the name there was a general squeeze,
So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd
In comfort, at their own aërial ease,
But were all ramm'd, and jamm'd (but to be balk'd,
As we shall see), and jostled hands and knees,
Like wind compress'd and pent within a bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

75

The shadow came—a tall, thin, grey-hair'd figure,
That look'd as it had been a shade on earth;
Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
But nought to mark its breeding or its birth;
Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,
With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth;
But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant—to *what*, none could say.

76

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
Could they distinguish whose the features were;
The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to guess;
They varied like a dream—now here, now there;

And several people swore from out the press,
They knew him perfectly; and one could swear
He was his father; upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother:

77

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife; but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at least
As oft as they their minds; though in full sight
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself—he was so volatile and thin.

78

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,
Presto! his face changed, and he was another;
And when that change was hardly well put on,
It varied, till I don't think his own mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other;
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary 'Iron Mask.'

79

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem—
"Three gentlemen at once" (as sagely says
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might deem
That he was not even *one*; now many rays
Were flashing round him; and now a thick steam
Hid him from sight—like fogs on London days:
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to people's fancies,
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

80

I've an hypothesis—'tis quite my own;
I never let it out till now, for fear
Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer,

On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown;
It is—my gentle public, lend thine ear!
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to call
Was really, truly, nobody at all.

81

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily view
Them written without heads; and books, we see,
Are fill'd as well without the latter too:
And really till we fix on somebody
For certain sure to claim them as his due,
Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will bother
The world to say if *there* be mouth or author.

82

'And who and what art thou?' the Archangel said.
'For *that* you may consult my title-page,'
Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
'If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now.'—'Canst thou upbraid,'
Continued Michael, 'George Rex, or allege
Aught further?' Junius answer'd, 'You had better
First ask him for *his* answer to my letter:

83

'My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and tomb.'
'Repent'st thou not,' said Michael, 'of some past
Exaggeration? something which may doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
Too bitter—is it not so?—in thy gloom
Of passion?'—'Passion!' cried the phantom dim,
'I loved my country, and I hated him.

84

'What I have written, I have written: let
The rest be on his head or mine!' So spoke
Old 'Nominis Umbra'; and while speaking yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.

Then Satan said to Michael, 'Don't forget
To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;'—but at this time there was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom stir'd.

85

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
Of cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and look'd as if his journey cost
Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,
'What's this?' cried Michael; 'why, 'tis not a ghost?'
'I know it,' quoth the incubus; 'but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.

86

'Confound the renegado! I have sprain'd
My left wing, he's so heavy; one would think
Some of his works about his neck were chain'd.
But to the point; while hovering o'er the brink
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),
I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel—
No less on history than the Holy Bible.

87

'The former is the devil's scripture, and
The latter yours, good Michael: so the affair
Belongs to all of us, you understand.
I snatch'd him up just as you see him there,
And brought him off for sentence out of hand:
I've scarcely been ten minutes in the air—
At least a quarter it can hardly be:
I dare say that his wife is still at tea.'

88

Here Satan said, 'I know this man of old,
And have expected him for some time here;
A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
Or more conceited in his petty sphere:

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

But surely it was not worth while to fold
Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.

89

'But since he's here, let's see what he has done.'
'Done!' cried Asmodeus, 'he anticipates
The very business you are now upon,
And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates.
Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
When such an ass as this, like Balaam's, prates?'
'Let's hear,' quoth Michael, 'what he has to say:
You know we're bound to that in every way.'

90

Now the bard, glad to get an audience, which
By no means often was his case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow:
But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

91

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be spurr'd
Into recitative, in great dismay
Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long array;
And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his founder'd verses under way,
And cried, 'For God's sake stop, my friend! 'twere best—
Non Di, non homines—you know the rest.'

92

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
Which seem'd to hold all verse in detestation;
The angels had of course enough of song
When upon service; and the generation

Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
Before, to profit by a new occasion:
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd, 'What! what!
Pye come again? No more—no more of that!

93

The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried 'Off, off!
As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,
The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

94

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
A good deal like a vulture in the face,
With a hook nose and a hawk's eye, which gave
A smart and sharper-looking sort of grace
To his whole aspect, which, though rather grave,
Was by no means so ugly as his case;
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony '*de se*.'

95

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd the noise
With one still greater, as is yet the mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling voice,
Which now and then will make a slight inroad
Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrow'd;
And now the bard could plead his own bad cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

96

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 'twas his way
Upon all topics; 'twas, besides, his bread,
Of which he butter'd both sides; 'twould delay

Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread),
And take up rather more time than a day,
To name his works—he would but cite a few—
'Wat Tyler'—'Rhymes on Blenheim'—'Waterloo.'

97

He had written praises of a regicide;
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever;
Then grew a hearty anti-jacobin—
Had turn'd his coat—and would have turn'd his skin.

98

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had call'd
Reviewing 'the ungentle craft,' and then
Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd—
Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had been maul'd;
He had written much blank verse, and blanker prose,
And more of both than anybody knows.

99

He had written Wesley's life:—here turning round
To Satan, 'Sir, I'm ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most allures
The pious purchaser; and there's no ground
For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints.'

100

Satan bow'd, and was silent. 'Well, if you,
With amiable modesty, decline
My offer, what says Michael? There are few
Whose memoirs could be render'd more divine.

Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it was once, but I would make you shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my own
Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown.

101

'But talking about trumpets, here's my Vision!
Now you shall judge, all people; yes, you shall
Judge with my judgment, and by my decision
Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.
I settle all these things by intuition,
Times present, past, to come, heaven, hell, and all,
Like King Alfonso. When I thus see double,
I save the Deity some worlds of trouble.'

102

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of devils, saints,
Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the contents;
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang,
Like lightning, off from his 'melodious twang.'

103

Those grand heroics acted as a spell:
The angels stopp'd their ears and plied their pinions;
The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions—
(For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump—but, lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

104

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys,
And at the fifth line knock'd the poet down;
'Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,

Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wrcath, whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

105

He first sank to the bottom—like his works,
But soon rose to the surface—like himself;
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like corks,
By their own rottenness, 'light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some 'Life' or 'Vision,'
As Welborn says—'the devil turn'd precisian.'

106

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
And show'd me what I in my turn have shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
Was, that King George slipp'd into heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

The Deformed Transformed

This drama is believed to have been composed between the death of his illegitimate daughter Allegra in April 1822 and the death of Shelley in the July of the same year—both of them events that made a deep impression on the poet's mind—and was published in February 1824. According to his own prefatory note, the story was derived partly from an obscure novel, *The Three Brothers*, by Joshua Pickersgill, which had appeared in 1803, partly from 'the *Faust* of the great Goethe.' Physical deformity was a subject very close to Byron's heart.

A DRAMA

ADVERTISEMENT

This production is founded partly on the story of a novel called 'The Three Brothers,' published many years ago, from which M. G. Lewis's 'Wood Demon' was also taken; and partly on the 'Faust' of the great Goethe. The present publication contains the two first Parts only, and the opening chorus of the third. The rest may perhaps appear hereafter.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

STRANGER, *afterwards* CÆSAR
ARNOLD
BOURBON
PHILIBERT
CELLINI

BERTHA
OLIMPIA

*Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome,
Priests, Peasants, etc.*

PART I

SCENE I. *A Forest.*

Enter ARNOLD *and his mother* BERTHA.

BERTHA: Out, hunchback!

ARNOLD: I was born so, mother!

BERTHA: Out,
Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven sons,
The sole abortion!

ARNOLD: Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!

BERTHA: I would so, too!
But as thou *hast*—hence, hence—and do thy best!
That back of thine may bear its burthen; 'tis
More hugh, if not so broad as that of others.

ARNOLD: It *bears* its burthen;—but, my heart! Will it
Sustain that which you lay upon it, mother?
I love, or, at the least, I loved you: nothing
Save you, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me—do not kill me!

BERTHA: Yes—I nursed thee,
Because thou wert my first-born, and I knew not
If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of nature. But get hence,
And gather wood!

ARNOLD: I will: but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers are
So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn me;
Our milk has been the same.

BERTHA: As is the hedgehog's,
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple next day sore and udder dry.
Call not thy brothers brethren! Call me not
Mother; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin, out!

[Exit BERTHA.]

ARNOLD [*solus*]: Oh, mother!—She is gone, and I
must do
Her bidding;—wearily, but willingly
I would fulfil it, could I only hope
A kind word in return. What shall I do?

[ARNOLD begins to cut wood: in doing this he
wounds one of his hands.]

My labour for the day is over now.
Accursed be this blood that flows so fast;
For double curses will be my meed now
At home—What home? I have no home, no kin,
No kind—not made like other creatures, or

To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed, too,
 Like them? Oh, that each drop which falls to earth
 Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung me!
 Or that the devil, to whom they liken me,
 Would aid his likeness! If I must partake
 His form, why not his power? Is it because
 I have not his will too? For one kind word
 From her who bore me would still reconcile me
 Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
 The wound.

[ARNOLD goes to a spring, and stoops to wash his hand;
he starts back.

They are right; and Nature's mirror shows me
 What she hath made me. I will not look on it
 Again, and scarce dare think on't. Hideous wretch
 That I am! The very waters mock me with
 My horrid shadow—like a demon placed
 Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
 From drinking therein.

[*He pauses.*

And shall I live on,
 A burden to the earth, myself, and shame
 Unto what brought me into life! Thou blood,
 Which flow'st so freely from a scratch, let me
 Try if thou wilt not in a fuller stream
 Pour forth my woes for ever with thyself
 On earth, to which I will restore at once
 This hateful compound of her atoms, and
 Resolve back to her elements, and take
 The shape of any reptile save myself,
 And make a world for myriads of new worms!
 This knife! now let me prove if it will sever
 This wither'd slip of nature's nightshade—my
 Vile form—from the creation, as it hath
 The green bough from the forest.

[ARNOLD places the knife in the ground,
with the point upwards.

Now 'tis set,

And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
 On the fair day, which sees no foul thing like
 Myself, and the sweet sun which warm'd me, but
 In vain. The birds—how joyously they sing!
 So let them, for I would not be lamented:

ARNOLD: Do you—dare *you*
To taunt me with my born deformity?

STRANGER: Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
Cloven foot of thine, or the swift dromedary
With thy sublime of humps, the animals
Would revel in the compliment. And yet
Both beings are more swift, more strong, more mighty
In action and endurance than thyself,
And all the fierce and fair of the same kind
With thee. Thy form is natural: 'twas only
Nature's mistaken largess to bestow
The gifts which are of others upon man.

ARNOLD: Give me the strength then of the buffalo's
foot,

When he spurs high the dust, beholding his
Near enemy; or let me have the long
And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,
The helmless dromedary!—and I'll bear
Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly patience.

STRANGER: I will.

ARNOLD [*with surprise*]: Thou *canst*?

STRANGER: Perhaps. Would you aught else?

ARNOLD: Thou mockest me.

STRANGER: Not I. Why should I mock
What all are mocking? That's poor sport, methinks.
To talk to thee in human language (for
Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester
Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar,
Or wolf, or lion, leaving paltry game
To petty burghers, who leave once a year
Their walls, to fill their household caldrons with
Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at thee,—
Now *I* can mock the mightiest.

ARNOLD: Then waste not
Thy time on me: I seek thee not.

STRANGER: Your thoughts
Are not far from me. Do not send me back:
I'm not so easily recall'd to do
Good service.

ARNOLD: What wilt thou do for me?

STRANGER: Change
Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so irks you;

Or form you to your wish in any shape.

ARNOLD: Oh! then you are indeed the demon, for
Nought else would wittingly wear mine.

STRANGER: I'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore, and give thee
Thy choice.

ARNOLD: On what condition?

STRANGER: There's a question!
An hour ago you would have given your soul
To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.

ARNOLD: No; I will not.
I must not compromise my soul.

STRANGER: What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a carcass?

ARNOLD: 'Tis an aspiring one, whate'er the tenement
In which it is mislodged. But name your compact:
Must it be sign'd in blood?

STRANGER: Not in your own.

ARNOLD: Whose blood then?

STRANGER: We will talk of that hereafter.
But I'll be moderate with you, for I see
Great things within you. You shall have no bond
But your own will, no contract save your deeds.
Are you content?

ARNOLD: I take thee at thy word.

STRANGER: Now then!

*[The Stranger approaches the fountain,
and turns to ARNOLD.]*

A little of your blood.

ARNOLD: For what?

STRANGER: To mingle with the magic of the waters,
And make the charm effective.

ARNOLD *[holding out his wounded arm]*: Take it all.

STRANGER: Not now. A few drops will suffice for this.

*[The Stranger takes some of ARNOLD's blood
in his hand, and casts it into the fountain.]*

Shadows of beauty!

Shadows of power!

Rise to your duty—

This is the hour!

Walk lovely and pliant
From the depth of this fountain,
As the cloud-shapen giant
Bestrides the Hartz Mountain.
Come as ye were,
That our eyes may behold
The model in air
Of the form I will mould,
Bright as the Iris
When ether is spann'd;—
Such *his* desire is, [Pointing to ARNOLD.
Such my command!
Demons heroic—
Demons who wore
The form of the stoic
Or sophist of yore—
Or the shape of each victor,
From Macedon's boy,
To each high Roman's picture,
Who breathed to destroy—
Shadows of beauty!
Shadows of power!
Up to your duty—
This is the hour!
[Various phantoms arise from the waters, and pass in
succession before the Stranger and ARNOLD.

ARNOLD: What do I see?

STRANGER: The black-eyed Roman, with
The eagle's beak between those eyes which ne'er
Beheld a conqueror, or look'd along
The land he made not Rome's, while Rome became
His, and all theirs who heir'd his very name.

ARNOLD: The phantom's bald; my quest is beauty.
Could I
Inherit but his fame with his defects!

STRANGER: His brow was girt with laurels more than
hairs.

You see his aspect—choose it, or reject.
I can but promise you his form; his fame
Must be long sought and fought for.

ARNOLD: I will fight, too.
But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass;

His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.

STRANGER: Then you are far more difficult to please
Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus's mother,
Or Cleopatra at sixteen—an age
When love is not less in the eye than heart.
But be it so! Shadow, pass on!

[The phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears.]

ARNOLD: And can it
Be, that the man who shook the earth is gone,
And left no footstep?

STRANGER: There you err. His substance
Left graves enough, and woes enough, and fame
More than enough to track his memory;
But for his shadow, 'tis no more than yours,
Except a little longer and less crooked
I' the sun. Behold another!

[A second phantom passes.]

ARNOLD: Who is he?

STRANGER: He was the fairest and the bravest of Athenians. Look upon him well.

ARNOLD: He is
More lovely than the last. How beautiful!

STRANGER: Such was the curled son of Clinias;—
Wouldst thou
Invest thee with his form?

ARNOLD: Would that I had
Been born with it! But since I may choose further,
I will *look* further.

[The shade of Alcibiades disappears.]

STRANGER: Lo! behold again!

ARNOLD: What! that low, swarthy, short-nosed,
round-eyed satyr,
With the wide nostrils and Silenus' aspect,
The splay feet and low stature! I had better
Remain that which I am.

STRANGER: And yet he was
The earth's perfection of all mental beauty,
And personification of all virtue.
But you reject him?

ARNOLD: If his form could bring me
That which redeem'd it—no.

STRANGER: I have no power
To promise that; but you may try, and find it
Easier in such a form, or in your own.

ARNOLD: No. I was not born for philosophy,
Though I have that about me which has need on't.
Let him fleet on.

STRANGER: Be air, thou hemlock-drinker!

[*The shadow of Socrates disappears: another rises.*]

ARNOLD: What's here? whose broad brow and whose
curly beard

And manly aspect look like Hercules,
Save that his jocund eye hath more of Bacchus
Than the sad purger of the infernal world,
Leaning dejected on his club of conquest,
As if he knew the worthlessness of those
For whom he had fought.

STRANGER: It was the man who lost
The ancient world for love.

ARNOLD: I cannot blame him,
Since I have risk'd my soul because I find not
That which he exchanged the earth for.

STRANGER: Since so far
You seem congenial, will you wear his features?

ARNOLD: No. As you leave me choice, I am difficult,
If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
Have seen else on this side of the dim shore
Whence they float back before us.

STRANGER: Hence, triumvir,
Thy Cleopatra's waiting.

[*The shade of Antony disappears: another rises.*]

ARNOLD: Who is this?
Who truly looketh like a demigod,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs,
Which he wears as the sun his rays—a something
Which shines from him, and yet is but the flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was he e'er human only?

STRANGER: Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that form'd his urn.

ARNOLD: Who was this glory of mankind?

STRANGER:

The shame

Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in war—
Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.

ARNOLD: Yet one shadow more.

STRANGER [*addressing the shadow*]: Get thee to Lamia's
lap!

[*The shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes vanishes. another rises*

I'll fit you still,

Fear not, my hunchback: if the shadows of
That which existed please not your nice taste,
I'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new garment.

ARNOLD: Content! I will fix here.

STRANGER:

I must commend

Your choice. The god-like son of the sea-goddess,
The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus, roll'd o'er sands of gold,
Softened by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,
All vow'd to Sperchius as they were—behold them!
And *him*—as he stood by Polixena,
With sanction'd and with soften'd love, before
The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep passion
For the sweet downcast virgin, whose young hand
Trembled in *his* who slew her brother. So
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece look'd her last upon her best, the instant
Ere Paris' arrow flew.

ARNOLD: I gaze upon him

As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelope mine.

STRANGER: You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty, if the proverb's true
Of mortals, that extremes meet.

ARNOLD:

Come! Be quick!

I am impatient.

STRANGER: As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not,
But dream it is what must be.

ARNOLD: Must I wait?

STRANGER: No; that were a pity. But a word or two:
His stature twelve cubits; would you so far
Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?

ARNOLD: Why not?

STRANGER: Glorious ambition!
I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David:
But thou, my manikin, wouldst soar a show
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,
If such be thy desire; and yet, by being
A little less removed from present men
In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found mammoth: and their cursed engines,
Their culverins, and so forth, would find way
Through our friend's armour there, with greater ease
Than the adulterer's arrow through his heel,
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptize
In Styx.

ARNOLD: Then let it be as thou deem'st best.

STRANGER: Thou shalt be beauteous as the thing thou
seest,
And strong as what it was, and——

ARNOLD: I ask not
For valour, since deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.
They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them.

STRANGER. Well spoken! and thou doubtless wilt remain
Form'd as thou art. I may dismiss the mould
Of shadow, which must turn to flesh, to incase
This daring soul, which could achieve no less
Without it.

ARNOLD: Had no power presented me
The possibility of change, I would
Have done the best which spirit may to make
Its way with all deformity's dull, deadly
Discouraging weight upon me, like a mountain,
In feeling, on my heart as on my shoulders—
A hateful and unsightly molehill, to
The eyes of happier men. I would have look'd
On beauty in that sex which is the type
Of all we know or dream of beautiful
Beyond the world they brighten, with a sigh—
Not of love, but despair; nor sought to win,
Though to a heart all love, what could not love me
In turn, because of this vile crooked clog,
Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have borne
It all, had not my mother spurn'd me from her.
The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
Of shape;—my dam beheld my shape was hopeless.
Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
I knew the passionate part of life, I had
Been a clod of the valley,—happier nothing
Than what I am. But even thus, the lowest,
Ugliest, and meanest of mankind, what courage
And perseverance could have done, perchance
Had made me something—as it has made heroes
Of the same mould as mine. You lately saw me
Master of my own life, and quick to quit it;
And he who is so is the master of
Whatever dreads to die.

STRANGER: Decide between
What you have been, or will be.

ARNOLD: I have done so.
You have open'd brighter prospects to my eyes,
And sweeter to my heart. As I am now,
I might be fear'd, admired, respected, loved
Of all save those next to me, of whom I
Would be beloved. As thou showest me

A choice of forms, I take the one I view.
Haste! haste!

STRANGER: And what shall I wear?

ARNOLD: Surely, he
Who can command all forms will choose the highest,
Something superior even to that which was
Pelides now before us. Perhaps *his*
Who slew him, that of Paris: or—still higher—
The poet's god, clothed in such limbs as are
Themselves a poetry.

STRANGER: Less will content me;
For I, too, love a change.

ARNOLD: Your aspect is
Dusky, but not uncomely.

STRANGER: If I chose,
I might be whiter; but I have a penchant
For black—it is so honest, and besides
Can neither blush with shame nor pale with fear;
But I have worn it long enough of late,
And now I'll take your figure.

ARNOLD: Mine!

STRANGER: Yes. You
Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with Bertha,
Your mother's offspring. People have their tastes:
You have yours—I mine.

ARNOLD: Despatch! Despatch!

STRANGER: Even so.

[*The Stranger takes some earth and moulds it along
the turf, and then addresses the phantom of
Achilles.*

Beautiful shadow

Of Thetis's boy!

Who sleeps in the meadow

Whose grass grows o'er Troy:
From the red earth, like Adam,

Thy likeness I shape,

As the being who made him,

Whose actions I ape.

Thou clay, be all glowing,

Till the rose in his cheek

Be as fair as, when blowing,

It wears its first streak!

Yc violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes!
And thou, sunshiny water,
Of blood take the guise!
Let these hyacinth boughs
Be his long flowing hair,
And wave o'er his brows
As thou waviest in air!
Let his heart be this marble
I tear from the rock!
But his voice as the warble
Of birds on yon oak!
Let his flesh be the purest
Of mould, in which grew
The lily-root surest,
And drank the best dew!
Let his limbs be the lightest
Which clay can compound,
And his aspect the brightest
On earth to be found!
Elements, near me,
Be mingled and stirr'd,
Know me, and hear me,
And leap to my word!
Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation!
'Tis done! He hath taken
His stand in creation!

[ARNOLD falls senseless; his soul passes into the shape of Achilles, which rises from the ground; while the phantom has disappeared, part by part, as the figure was formed from the earth.]

ARNOLD [in his new form]: I love, and I shall be beloved! O, life!

At last I feel thee! Glorious spirit!

STRANGER: Stop!
What shall become of your abandon'd garment,
Yon hump, and lump, and clod of ugliness,
Which late you wore, or were?

ARNOLD: Who cares? Let wolves
And vultures take it, if they will.

STRANGER: And if
They do, and are not scared by it, you'll say
It must be peace-time, and no better fare
Abroad i' the fields.

ARNOLD: Let us but leave it there
No matter what becomes on 't.

STRANGER: That's ungracious,
If not ungrateful. Whatsoe'er it be,
It hath sustain'd your soul full many a day.

ARNOLD: Ay, as the dunghill may conceal a gem
Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.

STRANGER: But if I give another form, it must be
By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid have long
Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your interlopers. The devil may take men,
Not make them,—though he reap the benefit
Of the original workmanship: and therefore
Some one must be found to assume the shape
You have quitted.

ARNOLD: Who would do so?

[illegible]

ARNOLD: You!

STRANGER: I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of beauty.

ARNOLD: True. I forget all things in the new joy
Of this immortal change.

STRANGER: In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow.

ARNOLD: I would be spared this.

STRANGER: But it cannot be.
What! shrink already, being what you are,
From seeing what you were?

ARNOLD: Do as thou wilt.

STRANGER [*to the late form of ARNOLD, extended on the earth*]: Clay! not dead, but soul-less!

Though no man would choose thee,
An immortal no less

Deigns not to refuse thee.

Clay thou art; and unto spirit
All clay is of equal merit.
Fire! *without* which nought can live;
Fire! but *in* which nought can live,
 Save the fabled salamander,
 Or immortal souls which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
 Burning in a quenchless lot.
Fire! the only element
 Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,
 Save the worm which dieth not,
 Can preserve a moment's form,
But must with thyself be blent:
Fire! man's safeguard and his slaughter:
Fire! Creation's first-born daughter,
 And Destruction's threaten'd son,
 When heaven with the world hath done:
Fire! assist me to renew
Life in what lies in my view
 Stiff and cold!
His resurrection rests with me and you!
One little, marshy spark of flame—
And he again shall seem the same;
 But I his spirit's place shall hold!
 [*An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood and rests on the
 brow of the body. The Stranger disappears; the body
 rises.*]
ARNOLD [*in his new form*]: Oh! horrible!
STRANGER [*in ARNOLD's late shape*]: What! tremblest
 thou?
ARNOLD: Not so—
I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape
Thou lately worst?
STRANGER: To the world of shadows.
But let us thread the present. Whither wilt thou?
ARNOLD: Must thou be my companion?
STRANGER: Wherefore not?
Your betters keep worse company.
ARNOLD: My betters!
STRANGER: Oh! you wax proud, I see, of your new form:
I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That's well;

You improve apace;—two changes in an instant,
And you are old in the world's ways already.
But bear with me: indeed you'll find me useful
Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pronounce
Where shall we now be errant?

ARNOLD: Where the world
Is thickest, that I may behold it in
Its workings.

STRANGER: That's to say, where there is war
And woman in activity. Let's see!
Spain—Italy—the new Atlantic world—
Afric, with all its Moors. In very truth,
There is small choice: the whole race are just now
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.

ARNOLD: I have heard great things of Rome.

STRANGER: A goodly choice—
And scarce a better to be found on earth,
Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide too;
For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish scion
Of the old Vandals, are at play along
The sunny shores of the world's garden.

ARNOLD: How
Shall we proceed?

STRANGER: Like gallants, on good coursers.
What, ho! my chargers! Never yet were better,
Since Phaeton was upset into the Po.
Our pages too!

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black horses.

ARNOLD: A noble sight!

STRANGER: And of
A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,
Or your Kochlini race of Araby,
With these!

ARNOLD: The mighty steam, which volumes high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very air;
And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies, wheel
Around their manes, as common insects swarm
Round common steeds towards sunset.

STRANGER: Mount, my lord:
They and I are your servitors.

ARNOLD: And these
Our dark-eyed pages—what may be their names?
STRANGER: You shall baptize them.
ARNOLD: What! in holy water?
STRANGER: Why not? The deeper sinner, better saint.
ARNOLD: They are beautiful, and cannot, sure, be demons.
STRANGER: True; the devil's always ugly; and your beauty
Is never diabolical.

ARNOLD: I'll call him
Who bears the golden horn, and wears such bright
And blooming aspect, *Huon*; for he looks
Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,
And never found till now. And for the other
And darker, and more thoughtful, who smiles not,
But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a day.
And you?

STRANGER: I have ten thousand names, and twice
As many attributes: but as I wear
A human shape, will take a human name.

ARNOLD: More human than the shape (though it was
mine once)

I trust.

STRANGER: Then call me *Cæsar*.

ARNOLD: Why, that name
Belongs to empires, and has been but borne
By the world's lords.

STRANGER: And therefore fittest for
The devil in disguise—since so you deem me,
Unless you call me pope instead.

ARNOLD: Well, then,
Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain *Arnold* still.

CÆSAR: We'll add a title—
'Count *Arnold*': it hath no ungracious sound,
And will look well upon a *billet-doux*.

ARNOLD: Or in an order for a battle-field.

CÆSAR [*sings*]: To horse! to horse! my coal-black steed
Paws the ground, and snuffs the air!
There's not a foal of Arab's breed
More knows whom he must bear;

On the hill he will not tire,
Swifter as it waxes higher;
In the marsh he will not slacken,
On the plain be overtaken;
In the wave he will not sink,
Nor pause at the brook's side to drink;
In the race he will not pant,
In the combat he'll not faint;
On the stones he will not stumble,
Time nor toil shall make him humble;
In the stall he will not stiffen,
But be winged as a griffin,
Only flying with his feet:
And will not such a voyage be sweet?
Merrily! merrily! never unsound,
Shall our bonny black horses skim over the ground!
From the Alps to the Caucasus, ride we, or fly!
For we'll leave them behind in the glance of an eye.
[*They mount their horses, and disappear.*]

SCENE II. *A Camp before the Walls of Rome.*

ARNOLD and CÆSAR.

CÆSAR: You are well enter'd now.

ARNOLD: Ay; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full
Of blood.CÆSAR: Then wipe them, and see clearly. Why!
Thou art a conqueror; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bourbon,
Late constable of France; and now to be
Lord of the city which hath been earth's lord
Under its emperors, and—changing sex,
Not sceptre, an hermaphrodite of empire—
Lady of the old world.ARNOLD: How *old*? What! are there
New worlds?CÆSAR: To *you*. You'll find there are such shortly,
By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold;
From one *half* of the world named a *whole* new one,
Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.

ARNOLD: I'll trust them.

CÆSAR: Do! they will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth.

ARNOLD: Dog!

CÆSAR: Man!

ARNOLD: Devil!

CÆSAR: Your obedient humble servant.

ARNOLD: Say *master* rather. Thou hast lured me on,
Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am here.

CÆSAR: And where wouldst thou be?

ARNOLD: Oh, at peace—in peace.

CÆSAR: And where is that which is so? From the star
To the winding worm, all life is motion; and
In life *commotion* is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and destroying as it sweeps
The stars, goes out. The poor worm winds its way,
Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the subject
Of something which has made it live and die.
You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fix'd necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not.

ARNOLD: And when it prospers——

CÆSAR: 'Tis no rebellion.

ARNOLD: Will it prosper now?

CÆSAR: The Bourbon hath given orders for the assault,
And by the dawn there will be work.

ARNOLD: Alas!

And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from the cross,
Which his blood made a badge of glory and
Of joy (as once of torture unto him,
God and God's Son, man's sole and only refuge).

CÆSAR: 'Tis there, and shall be.

ARNOLD: What?

CÆSAR: The crucifix

Above, and many altar shrines below.
Also some culverins upon the walls,
And harquebusses, and what not; besides

The men who are to kindle them to death
Of other men.

ARNOLD: And those scarce mortal arches,
Pile above pile of everlasting wall,
The theatre where emperors and their subjects
(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze upon
The battles of the monarchs of the wild
And wood, the lion and his tusky rebels
Of the then untamed desert, brought to joust
In the arena (as right well they might,
When they had left no human foe unconquer'd);
Made even the forest pay its tribute of
Life to their amphitheatre, as well
As Dacia men to die the eternal death
For a sole instant's pastime, and 'Pass on
To a new gladiator!'—Must it fall?

CÆSAR: The city, or the amphitheatre?
The church, or one, or all? for you confound
Both them and me.

ARNOLD: To-morrow sounds the assault
With the first cock-crow.

CÆSAR: Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great sieges;
For men must have their prey after long toil.

ARNOLD: The sun goes down as calmly, and perhaps
More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.

CÆSAR: I saw him.

ARNOLD: You!

CÆSAR: Yes, sir. You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape,
And a worse name: I'm Cæsar and a hunchback
Now. Well! the first of Cæsars was a baldhead,
And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory. Thus
The world runs on, but we'll be merry still.
I saw your Romulus (simple as I am)
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same womb,
Because he leapt a ditch ('twas then no wall,
Whate'er it now be); and Rome's earliest cement
Was brother's blood; and if its native blood

Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 'twas yellow, it will never wear
The deep hue of the ocean and the earth,
Which the great robber sons of fratricide
Have made their never-ceasing scene of slaughter
For ages.

ARNOLD: But what have these done, their far
Remote descendants, who have lived in peace,
The peace of heaven, and in her sunshine of
Picty?

CÆSAR: And what had *they* done, whom the old
Romans o'erswept?—Hark!

ARNOLD: They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.

CÆSAR: And why should they not sing as well as swans?
They are black ones, to be sure.

ARNOLD: So, you are learn'd,
I see, too?

CÆSAR: In my grammar, certes. I
Was educated for a monk of all times,
And once I was well versed in the forgotten
Etruscan letters, and—were I so minded—
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer than
Your alphabet.

ARNOLD: And wherefore do you not?

CÆSAR: It answers better to resolve the alphabet
Back into hieroglyphics. Like your statesman,
And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchymist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have built
More Babels, without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's dull ooze,
Who fail'd and fled each other. Why? why, marry,
Because no man could understand his neighbour.
They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brotherhood,
Their Shibboleth, their Koran, Talmud, their
Cabala; their best brick-work, wherewithal
They build more——

ARNOLD [*interrupting him*]: Oh, thou everlasting sncerer!
Be silent! How the soldier's rough strain seems

Soften'd by distance to a hymn-like cadence!

Listen!

CÆSAR: Yes. I have heard the angels sing.

ARNOLD: And demons howl.

CÆSAR: And man, too. Let us listen: I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They pass'd the broad Po.
We have beaten all foemen,
We have captured a king,
We have turn'd back on no men,
And so let us sing!
Here's the Bourbon for ever!
Though penniless all,
We'll have one more endeavour
At yonder old wall.
With the Bourbon we'll gather
At day-dawn before
The gates, and together
Or break or climb o'er
The wall: on the ladder
As mounts each firm foot,
Our shout shall grow gladder,
And death only be mute.
With the Bourbon we'll mount o'er
The walls of old Rome,
And who then shall count o'er
The spoils of each dome?
Up! up with the lily!
And down with the keys!
In old Rome, the seven-hilly,
We'll revel at ease.
Her streets shall be gory,
Her Tiber all red;
And her temples so hoary
Shall clang with our tread.

Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
The Bourbon for aye!
Of our song bear the burden!
And fire, fire away!
With Spain for the vanguard,
Our varied host comes;
And next to the Spaniard
Beat Germany's drums;
And Italy's lances
Are couch'd at their mother;
But our leader from France is,
Who warr'd with his brother.
Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome.

CÆSAR: An indifferent song
For those within the walls, methinks, to hear.

ARNOLD: Yes, if they keep to their chorus. But here comes

The general with his chiefs and men of trust.
A goodly rebel!

Enter the Constable BOURBON 'cum suis,' etc. etc.

PHILIBERT: How now, noble prince,
You are not cheerful?

BOURBON: Why should I be so?

PHILIBERT: Upon the eve of conquest, such as ours,
Most men would be so.

BOURBON: If I were secure!

PHILIBERT: Doubt not our soldiers. Were the walls of adamant.

They'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp artillery.

BOURBON: That they will falter is my least of fears.
That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on—were those hoary walls
Mountains, and those who guard them like the gods
Of the old fables, I would trust my Titans;—
But now—

PHILIBERT: They are but men who war with mortals.

BOURBON: True: but those walls have girded in great
ages,
And sent forth mighty spirits. The past earth
And present phantom of imperious Rome
Is peopled with those warriors; and methinks
They flit along the eternal city's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy hands,
And beckon me away!

PHILIBERT: So let them! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of shadows?

BOURBON: They do not menace me. I could have faced,
Methinks, a Sylla's menace; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and death-like hands,
And with their thin aspen faces and fix'd eyes
Fascinate mine. Look there!

PHILIBERT: I look upon
A lofty battlement.

BOURBON: And there!

PHILIBERT: Not even
A guard in sight; they wisely keep below,
Shelter'd by the grey parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.

BOURBON: You are blind.

PHILIBERT: If seeing nothing more than may be seen
Be so.

BOURBON: A thousand years have mann'd the walls
With all their heroes,—the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive
The liberty of that I would enslave,
And the first Cæsar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.

PHILIBERT: Then conquer
The walls for which he conquer'd, and be greater!

BOURBON: True: so I will, or perish.

PHILIBERT: You can *not*.
In such an enterprise to die is rather
The dawn of an eternal day, than death:

[Count ARNOLD and CÆSAR advance

CÆSAR: And the mere men—do they too sweat beneath
The noon of this same ever-scorching glory?

BOURBON: Ah!
Welcome the bitter hunchback! and his master,
The beauty of our host, and brave as bcauteous,
And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.

CÆSAR: You will find,
So please your highness, no less for yourself.

BOURBON: And if I do, there will not be a labourer
More forward, hunchback!

CÆSAR: You may well say so,
For *you* have seen that back—as general,
Placed in the rear in action—but your foes
Have never seen it.

BOURBON: That's a fair retort,
For I provoked it:—but the Bourbon's breast
Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced
In danger's face as yours, were you the *devil*.

CÆSAR: And if I were, I might have saved myself
The toil of coming here.

PHILIBERT: Why so?

CÆSAR: One half
Of your brave bands of their own bold accord
Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.

BOURBON: Arnold, your
Slight crooked *friend's* as snake-like in his words
As his deeds.

CÆSAR: Your highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer—I am none;
And for my deeds, I only sting when stung.

BOURBON: You are brave, and that's enough for me;
and quick
In speech as sharp in action—and *that's* more.
I am not alone a soldier, but the soldiers'
Comrade.

CÆSAR: They are but bad company, your highness;
And worse even for their friends than foes, as being
More permanent acquaintance.

PHILIBERT: How now, fellow!
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.

CÆSAR: You mean I speak the truth.

I'll lie—it is as easy: then you'll praise me
For calling you a hero.

BOURBON: Philibert!
Let him alone; he's brave, and ever has
Been first, with that swart face and mountain shoulder,
In field or storm, and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of licence,
And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famish'd, sullen, grumbling slave,
Whom nothing can convince save a full meal,
And wine, and sleep, and a few maravedis,
With which he deems him rich.

CÆSAR: It would be well
If the earth's princes ask'd no more.

BOURBON: Be silent!

CÆSAR: Ay, but not idle. Work yourself with words!
You have few to speak.

PHILIBERT: What means the audacious prater?

CÆSAR: To prate, like other prophets.

BOURBON: Philibert!
Why will you vex him? Have we not enough
To think on? Arnold! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.

ARNOLD: I have heard as much, my lord.

BOURBON: And you will follow?

ARNOLD: Since I must not lead

BOURBON: 'Tis necessary for the further daring
Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost ladder's
First step.

CÆSAR: Upon its topmost, let us hope:
So shall he have his full deserts.

BOURBON: The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hill'd city hath
Retain'd her sway o'er nations, and the Cæsars
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or priest,
Still the world's masters! Civilized, barbarian,
Or saintly, still the walls of Romulus

Have been the circus of an empire. Well!

'Twas *their* turn—now 'tis ours; and let us hope
That we will fight as well, and rule much better.

CÆSAR: No doubt, the camp's the school of civic rights.
What would you make of Rome?

BOURBON: That which it was.

CÆSAR: In Alaric's time?

BOURBON: No, slave! in the first Cæsar's,
Whose name you bear like other curs——

CÆSAR: And kings!
'Tis a great name for blood-hounds.

BOURBON: There's a demon
In that fierce rattlesnake thy tongue. Wilt never
Be serious?

CÆSAR: On the eve of battle, no;—
That were not soldier-like. 'Tis for the general
To be more pensive: we adventurers
Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should we think?
Our tutelar deity, in a leader's shape,
Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof from hosts!
If the knaves take to thinking, you will have
To crack those walls alone.

BOURBON: You may sneer, since
'Tis lucky for you that you fight no worse for't.

CÆSAR: I thank you for the freedom; 'tis the only
Pay I have taken in your highness' service.

BOURBON: Well, sir, to-morrow you shall pay yourself.
Look on those towers; they hold my treasury;
But, Philibert, we'll in to council. Arnold,
We would request your presence.

ARNOLD: Prince, my service
Is yours, as in the field.

BOURBON: In both we prize it,
And yours will be a post of trust at daybreak.

CÆSAR: And mine?

BOURBON: To follow glory with the Bourbon.
Good night!

ARNOLD [*to* CÆSAR]: Prepare our armour for the assault,
And wait within my tent.

[*Exeunt* BOURBON, ARNOLD, PHILIBERT, *etc.*]

CÆSAR [*solus*]: Within thy tent!
Think'st thou that I pass from thee with my presence?

Or that this crooked coffer, which contain'd
 Thy principle of life, is aught to me
 Except a mask? And these are men, forsooth!
 Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's bastards!
 This is the consequence of giving matter
 The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,
 And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
 Ever relapsing into its first elements.
 Well! I must play with these poor puppets: 'tis
 The spirit's pastime in his idler hours.
 When I grow weary of it, I have business
 Amongst the stars, which these poor creatures deem
 Were made for them to look at. 'Twere a jest now
 To bring one down amongst them, and set fire
 Unto their anthill: how the pismires then
 Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and, ceasing
 From tearing down each other's nests, pipe forth
 One universal orison! Ha! ha! [Exit CÆSAR.]

PART II

SCENE I. *Before the walls of Rome. The Assault: the Army in motion, with ladders to scale the walls; BOURBON, with a white scarf over his armour, foremost.*

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

I

'Tis the morn, but dim and dark.
 Whither flies the silent lark?
 Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
 Is the day indeed begun?
 Nature's eye is melancholy
 O'er the city high and holy:
 But without there is a din
 Should arouse the saints within,
 And revive the heroic ashes
 Round which yellow Tiber dashes.
 Oh, ye seven hills! awaken,
 Ere your very base be shaken!

2

Hearken to the steady stamp!
Mars is in their every tramp!
Not a step is out of tune,
As the tides obey the moon!
On they march, though to self-slaughter,
Regular as rolling water,
Whose high waves o'ersweep the border
Of huge moles, but keep their order,
Breaking only rank by rank.
Hearken to the armour's clank!
Look down o'er each frowning warrior,
How he glares upon the barrier:
Look on each step of each ladder,
As the stripes that streak an adder.

3

Look upon the bristling wall,
Mann'd without an interval!
Round and round, and tier on tier,
Cannon's black mouth, shining spear,
Lit match, bell-mouth'd musketoon,
Gaping to be murderous soon;
All the warlike gear of old,
Mix'd with what we now behold,
In this strife 'twixt old and new,
Gather like a locusts' crew.
Shade of Remus! 'tis a time
Awful as thy brother's crime!
Christians war against Christ's shrine:—
Must its lot be like to thine?

4

Near—and near—and nearer still,
As the earthquake saps the hill,
First with trembling, hollow motion,
Like a scarce awaken'd ocean,
Then with stronger shock and louder,
Till the rocks are crush'd to powder —

Onward sweeps the rolling host!
Heroes of the immortal boast!
Mighty chiefs! eternal shadows!
First flowers of the bloody meadows
Which encompass Rome, the mother
Of a people without brother!
Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
Plough the root up of your laurels?
Ye who weep o'er Carthage burning,
Weep not—*strike!* for Rome is mourning!

5

Onward sweep the varied nations!
Famine long hath dealt their rations.
To the wall, with hate and hunger,
Numerous as wolves, and stronger,
On they sweep. Oh, glorious city!
Must thou be a theme for pity?
Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
Alaric was a gentle foeman,
Match'd with Bourbon's black banditti!
Rouse thee, thou eternal city;
Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
With thine own hand to thy porch,
Than behold such hosts pollute
Your worst dwelling with their foot.

6

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!
Ilion's children find no Hector;
Priam's offspring loved their brother;
Rome's great sire forgot his mother,
When he slew his gallant twin,
With inextinguishable sin.
See the giant shadow stride
O'er the ramparts high and wide!
When the first o'erleapt thy wall,
Its foundation mourn'd thy fall.
Now, though towering like a Babel,
Who to stop his steps are able?

Stalking o'er thy hughest dome,
Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

7

Now they reach thee in their anger:
Fire and smoke and hellish clangour
Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
Death is in thy walls and under.
Now the meeting steel first clashes,
Downward then the ladder crashes,
With its iron load all gleaming,
Lying at its foot blaspheming!
Up again! for every warrior
Slain, another climbs the barrier.
Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches
Europe's mingling gore enriches.
Rome! although thy wall may perish,
Such manure thy fields will cherish,
Making gay the harvest-home;
But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome!—
Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish!

8

Yet once more, ye old Penates!
Let not your quench'd hearths be Até's!
Yet again, ye shadowy heroes,
Yield not to these stranger Neros!
Though the son who slew his mother
Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother;
'Twas the Roman curb'd the Roman;—
Brennus was a baffled foeman.
Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
Rise! for yours are holier charters!
Mighty gods of temples falling,
Yet in ruin still appalling!
Mightier founders of those altars,
True and Christian,—strike the assaulters!
Tiber! Tiber! let thy torrent
Show even nature's self abhorrent.

Let each breathing heart dilated
 Turn, as doth the lion baited!
 Rome be crush'd to one wide tomb,
 But be still the Roman's Rome!

BOURBON, ARNOLD, CÆSAR, and others, arrive at the foot of the wall.
 ARNOLD is about to plant his ladder.

BOURBON: Hold, Arnold! I am first.

ARNOLD: Not so, my lord.

BOURBON: Hold, sir, I charge you! Follow! I am proud
 Of such a follower, but will brook no leader.

[BOURBON plants his ladder, and begins to mount.
 Now, boys! On! on!

[A shot strikes him, and BOURBON falls.

CÆSAR: And off!

ARNOLD: Eternal powers!
 The host will be appall'd,—but vengeance! vengeance!

BOURBON: 'Tis nothing—lend me your hand.

[BOURBON takes ARNOLD by the hand, and rises; but
 as he puts his foot on the step, falls again.
 Arnold! I am sped.

Conceal my fall—all will go well—conceal it!
 Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust anon;
 Let not the soldiers see it.

ARNOLD: You must be
 Removed; the aid of—

BOURBON: No, my gallant boy!
 Death is upon me. But what is *one* life?
 The Bourbon's spirit shall command them still.
 Keep them yet ignorant that I am but clay,
 Till they are conquerors—then do as you may.

CÆSAR: Would not your highness choose to kiss the
 cross?

We have no priest here, but the hilt of sword
 May serve instead—it did the same for Bayard.

BOURBON: Thou bitter slave! to name *him* at this time!
 But I deserve it.

ARNOLD [to CÆSAR]: Villain, hold your peace!

CÆSAR: What, when a Christian dies? Shall I not offer
 A Christian 'Vade in pace'?

ARNOLD: Silence! Oh!

Those eyes are glazing which o'erlook'd the world,
And saw no equal.

BOURBON: Arnold, shouldst thou see
France—But hark! hark! the assault grows warmer—Oh!
For but an hour, a minute more of life,
To die within the wall! Hence, Arnold, hence!
You lose time—they will conquer Rome without thee.

ARNOLD: And without *thee*.

BOURBON: Not so; I'll lead them still
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe not
That I have ceased to breathe. Away! and be
Victorious.

ARNOLD: But I must not leave thee thus.

BOURBON: You must—farewell—Up! up! the world is
winning.

[BOURBON *dies*.

CÆSAR [*to* ARNOLD]: Come, count, to business.

ARNOLD: True. I'll
weep hereafter.

[ARNOLD *covers* BOURBON's body with a mantle,
mounts the ladder, crying

The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome is ours!

CÆSAR: Good night, lord constable! thou wert a man.

[CÆSAR *follows* ARNOLD; *they reach the battlement*.

ARNOLD and CÆSAR *are struck down*;

CÆSAR: A precious Somerset! Is your countship injured?

ARNOLD: No. [Remounts the ladder

CÆSAR: A rare blood-hound, when his own is heated!

And 'tis no boy's play. Now he strikes them down!

His hand is on the battlement—he grasps it

As though it were an altar; now his foot

Is on it, and—What have we here? a Roman?

[A man *falls*.

The first bird of the covey! he has fallen

On the outside of the nest. Why, how now, fellow?

WOUNDED MAN: A drop of water!

CÆSAR: Blood's the only liquid

Nearer than Tiber.

WOUNDED MAN: I have died for Rome. [Dies

CÆSAR: And so did Bourbon, in another sense.

Oh, these immortal men! and their great motives!

But I must after my young charge. He is
By this time i' the forum. Charge! charge!

[CÆSAR mounts the ladder; the scene closes]

SCENE II. *The City. Combats between the Besiegers and Besieged
in the streets. Inhabitants flying in confusion.*

Enter CÆSAR.

CÆSAR: I cannot find my hero; he is mix'd
With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here? A cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper! Could they doff
Their hose as they have doff'd their hats, 'twould be
A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly; the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since the mire
Is of the self-same purple hue.

Enter a party fighting—ARNOLD at the head of the Besiegers.

He comes,
Hand in hand with the mild twins—Gore and Glory.
Holla! hold, count!

ARNOLD: Away! they must not rally.

CÆSAR: I tell thee, be not rash; a golden bridge
Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee
A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,
But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of Thetis' son,
I dipt thee not in Styx; and 'gainst a foe
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart
More than Pelides' heel; why, then, be cautious,
And know thyself a mortal still.

ARNOLD: And who
With aught of soul would combat if he were
Invulnerable? That were pretty sport.
Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions roar?

[ARNOLD rushes into the combat]

CÆSAR: A precious sample of humanity!
Well, his blood's up; and if a little's shed,
'Twill serve to curb his fever.

[ARNOLD engages with a Roman, who retires
towards a portico.

ARNOLD: Yield thee, slave!
I promise quarter.

ROMAN: That's soon said.

ARNOLD: And done—
My word is known.

ROMAN: So shall be my deeds.
[They re-engage. CÆSAR comes forward.

CÆSAR: Why, Arnold! hold thine own: thou hast in
hand

A famous artisan, a cunning sculptor;
Also a dealer in the sword and dagger.
Not so, my musqueteer; 'twas he who slew
The Bourbon from the wall.

ARNOLD: Ay, did he so?
Then he hath carved his monument.

ROMAN: I yet
May live to carve your better's.

CÆSAR: Well said, my man of marble! Benvenuto,
Thou hast some practice in both ways; and he
Who slays Cellini will have work'd as hard
As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks.

[ARNOLD disarms and wounds CELLINI, but slightly: the
latter draws a pistol, and fires; then retires, and
disappears through the portico.

CÆSAR: How farest thou? Thou hast a taste, methinks,
Of red Bellona's banquet.

ARNOLD [staggered]: 'Tis a scratch.
Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me thus.

CÆSAR: Where is it?

ARNOLD: In the shoulder, not the sword arm—
And that's enough. I am thirsty: would I had
A helm of water!

CÆSAR: That's a liquid now
In requisition, but by no means easiest
To come at.

ARNOLD: And my thirst increases;—but
I'll find a way to quench it.

CÆSAR: Or be quench'd
Thyself.
ARNOLD: The chance is even; we will throw
The dice thereon. But I lose time in prating;
Prithee be quick. [CÆSAR binds on the scarf.
And what dost thou so idly?
Why dost not strike?
CÆSAR: Your old philosophers
Beheld mankind as mere spectators of
The Olympic games. When I behold a prize
Worth wrestling for I may be found a Milo.
ARNOLD: Ay, 'gainst an oak.
CÆSAR: A forest, when it suits me
I combat with a mass, or not at all.
Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine;
Which is just now to gaze, since all these labourers
Will reap my harvest gratis.
ARNOLD: Thou art still
A fiend!
CÆSAR: And thou—a man.
ARNOLD: Why, such I fain would show me.
CÆSAR: True—as men are.
ARNOLD: And what is that?
CÆSAR: Thou feelest and thou see'st.
[Exit ARNOLD, joining in the combat, which still continues
between detached parties. The scene closes.

SCENE III. *St. Peter's. The Interior of the Church. The Pope at the Altar. Priests, etc., crowding in confusion, and Citizens flying for refuge, pursued by Soldiery.*

Enter CÆSAR.

A SPANISH SOLDIER: Down with them, comrades !
seize upon those lamps!
Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the chine!
His rosary's of gold!
LUTHERAN SOLDIER: Revenge! revenge!
Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance now—
Yonder stands Anti-Christ!
CÆSAR [interposing]: How now, schismatic?
What wouldst thou?

LUTHERAN SOLDIER: In the holy name of Christ.
Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a Christian.

CÆSAR: Yes, a disciple that would make the founder
Of your belief renounce it, could he see
Such proselytes. Best stint thyself to plunder.

LUTHERAN SOLDIER: I say he is the devil.

CÆSAR: Hush! keep that secret,
Lest he should recognise you for his own.

LUTHERAN SOLDIER: Why would you save him? I
repeat he is
The devil, or the devil's vicar upon earth.

CÆSAR: And that's the reason: would you make a
quarrel
With your best friends? You had far best be quiet;
His hour is not yet come.

LUTHERAN SOLDIER: That shall be seen!

[*The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward: a shot strikes him
from one of the Pope's Guards, and he falls at the foot
of the Altar.*]

CÆSAR [*to the Lutheran*]: I told you so.

LUTHERAN SOLDIER: And will you not avenge me?

CÆSAR: Not I! You know that 'Vengeance is the
Lord's':

You see he loves no interlopers.

LUTHERAN SOLDIER [*dying*]: Oh!
Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crown'd with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive
My feebleness of arm that reach'd him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'Tis
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon's
No more; the Harlot of the Seven Hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sackcloth
And ashes! [*The Lutheran dies.*]

CÆSAR: Yes, thine own amidst the rest.
Well done, old Babel!

[*The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the
Pontiff escapes, by a private passage, to the Vatican
and the Castle of St. Angelo.*]

CÆSAR: Ha! right nobly battled!
Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great professions,
Together by the ears and hearts! I have not
Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus

Took Jewry. But the Romans had the best then;
Now they must take their turn.

SOLDIERS: He hath escaped!
Follow!

ANOTHER SOLDIER: They have barr'd the narrow passage
up,
And it is clogg'd with dead even to the door.

CÆSAR: I am glad he hath escaped: he may thank me
for't

In part. I would not have his bulls abolish'd—
'Twere worth one half our empire: his indulgences
Demand some in return,—no, no, he must not
Fall;—and, besides, his now escape may furnish
A future miracle, in future proof
Of his infallibility.

[To the Spanish Soldierry.

Well, cut-throats!

What do you pause for? If you make not haste,
There will not be a link of pious gold left.
And *you*, too, Catholics! Would ye return
From such a pilgrimage without a relic?
The very Lutherans have more true devotion:
See how they strip the shrines!

SOLDIERS: By holy Peter!
He speaks the truth; the heretics will bear
The best away.

CÆSAR: And that were shame! Go to!
Assist in their conversion.

[The Soldiers disperse; many quit the Church, others enter.

CÆSAR: They are gone,
And others come: so flows the wave on wave
Of what these creatures call eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the ocean;
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So another!

Enter OLIMPIA, flying from the pursuit. She springs upon the Altar.

SOLDIER: She's mine!

ANOTHER SOLDIER [opposing the former]: You lie, I track'd
her first; and were she
The Pope's niece, I'll not yield her. [They fight.

THIRD SOLDIER [*advancing towards OLIMPIA*]: You may settle
Your claims; I'll make mine good.
OLIMPIA: Infernal slave!
You touch me not alive.
THIRD SOLDIER: Alive or dead!
OLIMPIA [*embracing a massive crucifix*]: Respect your God!
THIRD SOLDIER: Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.
[*As he advances, OLIMPIA, with a strong and sudden effort, casts down the crucifix; it strikes the Soldier, who falls.*]
THIRD SOLDIER: Oh, great God!
OLIMPIA: Ah! now you recognise him.
THIRD SOLDIER: My brain's crush'd!
Comrades, help, ho! All's darkness! [*He dies.*]
OTHER SOLDIERS [*coming up*]: Slay her, although she had a thousand lives:
She hath kill'd our comrade.
OLIMPIA: Welcome such a death!
You have no life to give, which the worst slave
Would take. Great God! through thy redeeming Son,
And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as
I would approach thee, worthy her, and him, and thee!

Enter ARNOLD.

ARNOLD: What do I see? Accursed jackals!
Forbear!
CÆSAR [*aside and laughing*]: Ha! ha! here's equity!
The dogs
Have as much right as he. But to the issue!
SOLDIERS: Count, she hath slain our comrade.
ARNOLD: With what weapon?
SOLDIER: The cross, beneath which he is crush'd;
behold him
Lie there, more like a worm than man; she cast it
Upon his head.
ARNOLD: Even so; there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye such,
Ye would have honour'd her. But get ye hence,
And thank your meanness, other God you have none,

For your existence. Had you touch'd a hair
Of those dishevell'd locks, I would have thinn'd
Your ranks more than the enemy. Away!
Ye jackals! gnaw the bones the lion leaves
But not even these till he permits.

A SOLDIER [*murmuring*]: The lion
Might conquer for himself then.

ARNOLD [*cuts him down*]: Mutineer!
Rebel in hell—you shall obey on earth!

[*The Soldiers assault ARNOLD.*]

ARNOLD: Come on! I'm glad on't! I will show you,
slaves,

How you should be commanded, and who led you
First o'er the wall you were so shy to scale,
Until I waved my banners from its height,
As you are bold within it.

[*ARNOLD mows down the foremost; the rest throw
down their arms*]

SOLDIERS: Mercy! mercy!

ARNOLD: Then learn to grant it. Have I taught you *who*
Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements?

SOLDIERS: We saw it, and we know it; yet forgive
A moment's error in the heat of conquest—
The conquest which you led to.

ARNOLD: Get you hence!
Hence to your quarters! you will find them fix'd
In the Colonna palace.

OLIMPIA [*aside*]: In my father's House!

ARNOLD [*to the soldiers*]: Leave your arms; ye have no
further need

Of such: the city's render'd. And mark well
You keep your hands clean, or I'll find out a stream
As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.

SOLDIERS [*deposing their arms and departing*]: We obey!

ARNOLD [*to OLIMPIA*]: Lady, you are safe.

OLIMPIA: I should be so,
Had I a knife even; but it matters not—
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down
Upon destruction, shall my head be dash'd,
Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee, man!

ARNOLD: I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured thee.

OLIMPIA: No! Thou hast only sack'd my native land,—
No injury!—and made my father's house
A den of thieves! No injury!—this temple—
Slippery with Roman and with holy gore!
No injury! And now thou wouldst preserve me,
To be—but that shall never be!

*[She raises her eyes to heaven, folds her robe round her,
and prepares to dash herself down on the side of the
Altar opposite to that where ARNOLD stands.]*

ARNOLD: Hold! hold!

I swear.

OLIMPIA: Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even hell would loathe thee.
I know thee.

ARNOLD: No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though—

OLIMPIA: I judge thee by thy mates;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.
I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;
Take mine, 'tis all thou e'er shalt have of me,
And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptized me God's,
I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeemed infant) than the holy water
The saints have sanctified!

*[OLIMPIA waves her hand to ARNOLD with disdain,
and dashes herself on the pavement from the Altar.]*

ARNOLD: Eternal God!

I feel thee now! Help! help! She's gone.

CÆSAR *[approaches]*: I am here.

ARNOLD: Thou! but oh, save her!

CÆSAR *[assisting him to raise OLIMPIA]*: She hath done
it well!

The leap was serious.

ARNOLD: Oh! she is lifeless!

CÆSAR: If

She be so, I have nought to do with that:

The resurrection is beyond me.

ARNOLD: Slave!

CÆSAR: Ay, slave or master, 'tis all one: methinks
Good words, however, are as well at times.

ARNOLD: Words!—Canst thou aid her?

CÆSAR: I will try. A sprinkling
Of that same holy water may be useful.

[*He brings some in his helmet from the font.*]

ARNOLD: 'Tis mix'd with blood.

CÆSAR: There is no cleaner now
In Rome.

ARNOLD: How pale! how beautiful! how lifeless!
Alive or dead, thou essence of all beauty,
I love but thee!

CÆSAR: Even so Achilles loved
Penthesilea: with his form it seems

You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.

ARNOLD: She breathes! But no, 'twas nothing, or the
last

Faint flutter life disputes with death.

CÆSAR: She breathes.

ARNOLD: *Thou* say'st it? Then 'tis truth.

CÆSAR: You do me right—
The devil speaks truth much oftener than he's deem'd:
He hath an ignorant audience.

ARNOLD [*without attending to him*]: Yes! her heart beats.
Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wish'd to beat with mine should vibrate
To an assassin's pulse.

CÆSAR: A sage reflection,
But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall we bear her?
I say she lives.

ARNOLD: And will she live?

CÆSAR: As much
As dust can.

ARNOLD: Then she is dead!

CÆSAR: Bah! bah! You are so,
And do not know it. She will come to life—
Such as you think so, such as you now are:
But we must work by human means.

ARNOLD: We will
Convey her unto the Colonna palace,
Where I have pitch'd my banner.

CÆSAR: Come then! raise her up!

ARNOLD: Softly!

CÆSAR: As softly as they bear the dead,
Perhaps because they cannot feel the jolting.

ARNOLD: But doth she live indeed?

CÆSAR: Nay, never fear!
But, if you rue it after, blame me not.

ARNOLD: Let her but live!

CÆSAR: The spirit of her life
Is yet within her breast, and may revive.
Count! count! I am your servant in all things,
And this is a new office:—'tis not oft
I am employ'd in such; but you perceive
How stanch a friend is what you call a fiend.
On earth you have often only fiends for friends;
Now I desert not mine. Soft! bear her hence
The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit!
I am almost enamour'd of her, as
Of old the angels of her earliest sex.

ARNOLD: Thou!

CÆSAR: I! But fear not. I'll not be your rival.

ARNOLD: Rival!

CÆSAR: I could be one right formidable;
But since I slew the seven husbands of
Tobias' future bride (and after all
Was smoked out by some incense), I have laid
Aside intrigue: 'tis rarely worth the trouble
Of gaining, or—what is more difficult—
Getting rid of your prize again; for there's
The rub! at least to mortals.

ARNOLD: Prithee, peace!
Softly! methinks her lips move, her eyes open!

CÆSAR: Like stars, no doubt; for that's a metaphor
For Lucifer and Venus.

ARNOLD: To the palace
Colonna, as I told you!

CÆSAR: Oh! I know
My way through Rome.

ARNOLD: Now onward, onward! Gently!

[*Exeunt, bearing OLIMPIA. The scene closes.*]

PART III

SCENE I. *A Castle in the Apennines, surrounded by a wild but smiling Country. Chorus of Peasants singing before the Gates.*

Chorus

I

The wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice!

2

The spring is come; the violet's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun:
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow on the hills cannot blast her bower,
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

3

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odour and virgin hues.

4

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December—
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthen'd hours;
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget
The virgin—virgin violet.

Enter CÆSAR.

CÆSAR [*singing*]: The wars are all over,
Our swords are all idle,
The steed bites the bridle.
The casque's on the wall.
There's rest for the rover;
But his armour is rusty,
And the veteran grows crusty,
As he yawns in the hall.
He drinks—but what's drinking?
A mere pause from thinking!
No bugle awakes him with life-and-death call.

Chorus

But the hound bayeth loudly,
The boar's in the wood,
And the falcon longs proudly
To spring from her hood:
On the wrist of the noble
She sits like a crest,
And the air is in trouble
With birds from their nest.

CÆSAR: Oh! shadow of glory!
Dim image of war!
But the chase hath no story,
Her hero no star,
Since Nimrod, the founder
Of empire and chase,
Who made the woods wonder
And quake for their race.
When the lion was young,
In the pride of his might,
Then 'twas sport for the strong
To embrace him in fight;
To go forth, with a pine
For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
Or strike through the ravine
At the foaming behemoth;

While man was in stature
As towers in our time,
The first-born of Nature,
And, like her, sublime!

Chorus

But the wars are over,
The spring is come;
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home;
They are happy, and we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo from every voice!
[*Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.*]

Don Juan

[The first four Cantos]

At one pole of Byron's achievements stands *Childe Harold*, at the other *Don Juan*. To gain a true impression of his genius and of his relationship to the social period in which he lived, both must be taken into account. Whereas *Childe Harold* represents the romantic Byron—the 'wandering prisoner of his own dark mind'—who made so deep an impression on London society between 1812 and 1816, *Don Juan* conveys the cheerful, disabused and ironic being who endeared himself to Hobhouse, Rogers and Moore. Like *Childe Harold*, the poem—at any rate, in the opening cantos—is very largely autobiographical. Donna Inez, Juan's prudish and mathematical mother, is a portrait of Annabella Milbanke, the formidable 'Princess of Parallelograms'. Sir Samuel Romilly, who had earned Byron's hatred during the separation proceedings, comes in for a ferocious and unjust sneer. Later episodes recall the feverish excitement of the poet's London life—his acquaintanceship with Sydney Smith (whose volubility Byron admired but resented) and his mingled love and loathing of the English scene. The first canto was written in September 1818; the sixteenth, which he did not intend to be the last, had been completed at the end of March 1823. Many of his English friends did not approve of *Don Juan*; and the poet's Italian mistress sternly criticised its moral tone.

'Difficile est propriè communia dicere.'—HORACE.

'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale? Yes, by Saint Anne, and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth, too!'—SHAKESPEARE, *Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will*.

CANTO THE FIRST¹

FRAGMENT

On the back of the Poet's MS. of Canto I.

I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling—
Because at least the past were pass'd away—
And for the future—(but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say—the future is a serious matter—
And so—for God's sake—hock and soda-water!

DEDICATION

I

Bob Southey! You're a poet—Poet-laureate,
And representative of all the race;
Although 'tis true that you turn'd out a Tory at
Last,—yours has lately been a common case;
And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at?
With all the Lakers, in and out of place?
A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like 'four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye;

2

'Which pye being open'd they began to sing'
(This old song and new simile holds good)
'A dainty dish to set before the King,'
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food;—
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood,—
'Explaining metaphysics to the nation—
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

¹ ['Begun at Venice September 6th; finished November 1st, 1818.'—B.]

3

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture quite a-dry, Bob!

4

And Wordsworth, in a rather long 'Excursion'
(I think the quarto holds five hundred pages),
Has given a sample from the vasty version
Of his new system to perplex the sages;
'Tis poetry—at least by his assertion,
And may appear so when the dog-star rages—
And he who understands it would be able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

5

You—Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion
From better company, have kept your own
At Keswick, and, through still continued fusion
Of one another's minds, at last have grown
To deem as a most logical conclusion,
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:
There is a narrowness in such a notion,
Which makes me wish you'd change your lakes for ocean.

6

I would not imitate the petty thought,
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,
For all the glory your conversion brought,
Since gold alone should not have been its price.
You have your salary: was't for that you wrought?
And Wordsworth has his place in the Excise.
You're shabby fellows—true—but poets still
And duly seated on the immortal hill.

7

Your bays may hide the baldness of your brows—

Perhaps some virtuous blushes;—let them go—

To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs—

And for the fame you would engross below,
The field is universal, and allows

Scope to all such as feel the inherent glow:

Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and Crabbe, will try
'Gainst you the question with posterity.

8

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian Muses,

Contend not with you on the winged steed,

I wish your fate may yield ye, when she chooses,

The fame you envy, and the skill you need;

And recollect a poet nothing loses

In giving to his brethren their full meed

Of merit, and complaint of present days

Is not the certain path to future praise.

9

He that reserves his laurels for posterity

(Who does not often claim the bright reversion)

Has generally no great crop to spare it, he

Being only injured by his own assertion;

And although here and there some glorious rarity

Arise like Titan from the sea's immersion,

The major part of such appellants go

To—God knows where—for no one else can know.

10

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,

Milton appealed to the Avenger, Time,

If Time, the Avenger, execrates his wrongs,

And makes the word 'Miltonic' mean 'sublime,'

He deign'd not to belie his soul in songs,

Nor turn his very talent to a crime;

He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,

But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

II

Think'st thou, could he—the blind Old Man—arise,
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze once more
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,
Or be alive again—again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless eyes,
And heartless daughters—worn—and pale—and poor;
Would *he* adore a sultan? *he* obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?

I2

Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's gore,
And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister shore,
The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could want,
With just enough of talent, and no more,
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,
And offer poison long already mix'd.

I3

An orator of such set trash of phrase
Ineffably—legitimately vile,
That even its grossest flatterers dare not praise,
Nor foes—all nations—condescend to smile;
Not even a sprightly blunder's spark can blaze
From that Ixion grindstone's ceaseless toil,
That turns and turns to give the world a notion
Of endless torments and perpetual motion.

I4

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,
And botching, patching, leaving still behind
Something of which its masters are afraid,
States to be curb'd, and thoughts to be confined,
Conspiracy or Congress to be made—
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind—
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old chains,
With God and man's abhorrence for its gains.

15

If we may judge of matter by the mind,
Emasculated to the marrow *It*
Hath but two objects, how to serve, and bind,
Deeming the chain it wears even men may fit,
Eutropius of its many masters,—blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit,
Fearless—because *no* feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

16

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its bonds,
For I will never *feel* them;—Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds
Beneath the lie this State-thing breathed o'er thee—
Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green wounds,
Have voices—tongues to cry aloud for me.
Europe has slaves, allies, kings, armies still,
And Southey lives to sing them very ill.

17

Meantime, Sir Laureate, I proceed to dedicate,
In honest simple verse, this song to you.
And, if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
'Tis that I still retain my 'buff and blue;'
My politics as yet are all to educate:
Apostasy's so fashionable, too,
To keep *one* creed's a task grown quite Herculean:
Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?

VENICE, September 16th, 1818.

I

I want a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one:
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan—

We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.

2

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And fill'd their sign-posts then, like Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, 'nine farrow' of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

3

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Pétion, Cloutz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know;
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Desaix, Moreau,
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

4

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war,
And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd;
There's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
'Tis with our hero quietly inurn'd;
Because the army's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concern'd,
Besides, the prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.

5

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,

And so have been forgotten:—I condemn none,
But can't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I'll take my friend Don Juan.

6

Most epic poets plunge 'in medias res'
(Horace makes this the heroic turnpike road),
And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
What went before—by way of episode,
While seated after dinner at his ease,
Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,
Which serves the happy couple for a tavern.

7

That is the usual method, but not mine—
My way is to begin with the beginning;
The regularity of my design
Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning,
And therefore I shall open with a line
(Although it cost me half an hour in spinning)
Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
And also of his mother, if you'd rather.

8

In Seville was he born, a pleasant city,
Famous for oranges and women—he
Who has not seen it will be much to pity,
So says the proverb—and I quite agree;
Of all the Spanish towns is none more pretty,
Cadiz, perhaps—but that you soon may see:—
Don Juan's parents lived beside the river,
A noble stream, and call'd the Guadalquivir.

9

His father's name was José—*Don*, of course,
A true Hidalgo, free from every stain
Of Moor or Hebrew blood, he traced his source
Through the most Gothic gentlemen of Spain;

A better cavalier ne'er mounted horse,
Or, being mounted, e'er got down again,
Than José, who begot our hero, who
Begot—but that's to come—Well, to renew:

10

His mother was a learned lady, famed
For every branch of every science known—
In every Christian language ever named,
With virtues equall'd by her wit alone:
She made the cleverest people quite ashamed,
And even the good with inward envy groan,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that she did.

11

Her memory was a mine: she knew by heart
All Calderon and greater part of Lopé,
So that if any actor miss'd his part
She could have served him for the prompter's copy;
For her Feinagle's were an useless art,
And he himself obliged to shut up shop—he
Could never make a memory so fine as
That which adorn'd the brain of Donna Incz.

12

Her favourite science was the mathematical,
Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity;
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was Attic all,
Her serious sayings darken'd to sublimity;
In short, in all things she was fairly what I call
A prodigy—her morning dress was dumity,
Her evening silk, or, in the summer, muslin,
And other stuffs, with which I won't stay puzzling.

13

She knew the Latin—that is, 'the Lord's prayer,'
And Greek—the alphabet—I'm nearly surc;
She read some French romances here and there,
Although her mode of speaking was not pure;

For native Spanish she had no great care,
At least her conversation was obscure;
Her thoughts were theorems, her words a problem,
As if she deem'd that mystery would ennoble 'em.

14

She liked the English and the Hebrew tongue,
And said there was analogy between 'em;
She proved it somehow out of sacred song,
But I must leave the proofs to those who've seen 'em,
But this I heard her say, and can't be wrong,
And all may think which way their judgments lean 'em,
"Tis strange—the Hebrew noun which means "I am,"
The English always use to govern d—n.'

15

Some women use their tongues—she *look'd* a lecture,
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a homily,
An all-in-all sufficient self-director,
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel Romilly,
The Law's expounder, and the State's corrector,
Whose suicide was almost an anomaly—
One sad example more, that 'All is vanity,'—
(The jury brought their verdict in 'Insanity.')

16

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or 'Coelebs' Wife' set out in quest of lovers,
Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw discovers;
To others' share let 'female errors fall,'
For she had not even one—the worst of all.

17

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel—
Of any modern female saint's comparison;
So far above the cunning powers of hell,
Her guardian angel had given up his garrison;

Even her minutest motions went as well
As those of the best time-piece made by Harrison:
In virtues nothing earthly could surpass her,
Save thine 'incomparable oil,' Macassar!

18

Perfect she was, but as perfection is
Inspid in this naughty world of ours,
Where our first parents never learn'd to kiss
Till they were exiled from their earlier bowers,
Where all was peace, and innocence, and bliss
(I wonder how they got through the twelve hours),
Don José, like a lineal son of Eve,
Went plucking various fruit without her leave.

19

He was a mortal of the careless kind,
With no great love for learning, or the learn'd,
Who chose to go where'er he had a mind,
And never dream'd his lady was concern'd;
The world, as usual, wickedly inclined
To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd,
Whisper'd he had a mistress, some said *two*,
But for domestic quarrels *one* will do.

20

Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
A great opinion of her own good qualities;
Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear it,
And such, indeed, she was in her moralities;
But then she had a devil of a spirit,
And sometimes mix'd up fancies with realities,
And let few opportunities escape
Of getting her liege lord into a scrape.

21

This was an easy matter with a man
Oft in the wrong, and never on his guard;
And even the wisest, do the best they can,
Have moments, hours, and days, so unprepared,

That you might 'brain them with their lady's fan';
And sometimes ladies hit exceeding hard,
And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
And why and wherefore no one understands.

22

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
With persons of no sort of education,
Or gentlemen, who, though well born and bred,
Grow tired of scientific conversation;
I don't choose to say much upon this head,
I'm a plain man, and in a single station,
But—Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd you all?

23

Don José and his lady quarrell'd—*why*,
Not any of the many could divine,
Though several thousand people chose to try,
'Twas surely no concern of theirs nor mine;
I loathe that low vice—curiosity;
But if there's anything in which I shine,
'Tis in arranging all my friends' affairs,
Not having, of my own, domestic cares.

24

And so I interfered, and with the best
Intentions, but their treatment was not kind;
I think the foolish people were possess'd,
For neither of them could I ever find,
Although their porter afterwards confess'd—
But that's no matter, and the worst's behind,
For little Juan o'er me threw, down stairs,
A pail of housemaid's water unawares.

25

A little curly-headed, good-for-nothing,
And mischief-making monkey from his birth;
His parents ne'er agreed except in doting
Upon the most unquiet imp on earth;

Instead of quarrelling, had they been but both in
Their senses, they'd have sent young master forth
To school, or had him soundly whipp'd at home,
To teach him manners for the time to come.

26

Don José and the Donna Inez led
For some time an unhappy sort of life,
Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead;
They lived respectably as man and wife,
Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred,
And gave no outward signs of inward strife,
Until at length the smother'd fire broke out,
And put the business past all kind of doubt.

27

For Inez call'd some druggists and physicians,
And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad*,
But as he had some lucid intermissions,
She next decided he was only *bad*;
Yet when they ask'd her for her depositions,
No sort of explanation could be had,
Save that her duty both to man and God
Required this conduct—which seem'd very odd.

28

She kept a journal, where his faults were noted,
And open'd certain trunks of books and letters,
All which might, if occasion served, be quoted:
And then she had all Seville for abettors,
Besides her good old grandmother (who doted);
The hearers of her case became repeaters,
Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges,
Some for amusement, others for old grudges.

29

And then this best and meekest woman bore
With such serenity her husband's woes,
Just as the Spartan ladies did of yore,
Who saw their spouses kill'd, and nobly chose

Never to say a word about them more—
Calmly she heard each calumny that rose,
And saw *his* agonies with such sublimity,
That all the world exclaim'd, 'What magnanimity!'

30

No doubt this patience, when the world is damning us,
Is philosophic in our former friends;
'Tis also pleasant to be deem'd magnanimous,
The more so in obtaining our own ends;
And what the lawyers call a '*malus animus*'
Conduct like this by no means comprehends:
Revenge in person's certainly no virtue,
But then 'tis not *my* fault, if *others* hurt you.

31

And if our quarrels should rip up old stories,
And help them with a lie or two additional,
I'm not to blame, as you well know—no more is
Any one else—they were become traditional;
Besides, their resurrection aids our glories
By contrast, which is what we just were wishing all:
And science profits by this resurrection—
Dead scandals form good subjects for dissection.

32

Their friends had tried at reconciliation,
Then their relations, who made matters worse,
('Twere hard to tell upon a like occasion
To whom it may be best to have recourse—
I can't say much for friend or yet relation):
The lawyers did their utmost for divorce,
But scarce a fee was paid on either side
Before, unluckily, Don José died.

33

He died: and most unluckily, because,
According to all hints I could collect
From counsel learned in those kinds of laws
(Although their talk's obscure and circumspect),

His death contrived to spoil a charming cause;
A thousand pities also with respect
To public feeling, which on this occasion
Was manifested in a great sensation.

34

But ah! he died; and buried with him lay
The public feeling and the lawyers' fees:
His house was sold, his servants sent away,
A Jew took one of his two mistresses,
A priest the other—at least so they say:
I ask'd the doctors after his disease—
He died of the slow fever called the tertian,
And left his widow to her own aversion.

35

Yet José was an honourable man,
That I must say, who knew him very well;
Therefore his frailties I'll no further scan,
Indeed there were not many more to tell:
And if his passions now and then outran
Discretion, and were not so peaceable
As Numa's (who was also named Pompilius),
He had been ill brought up, and was born bilious.

36

Whate'er might be his worthlessness or worth,
Poor fellow! he had many things to wound him,
Let's own—since it can do no good on earth—
It was a trying moment that which found him
Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
Where all his household gods lay shiver'd round him:
No choice was left his feelings or his pride,
Save death or Doctor's Commons—so he died.

37

Dying intestate, Juan was sole heir
To a chancery suit, and messuages and lands,
Which, with a long minority and care,
Promised to turn out well in proper hands:

Inez became sole guardian, which was fair,
And answer'd but to nature's just demands;
An only son left with an only mother
Is brought up much more wisely than another.

38

Sagest of women, even of widows, she
Resolved that Juan should be quite a paragon,
And worthy of the noblest pedigree:
(His sire was of Castile, his dam from Aragon).
Then for accomplishments of chivalry,
In case our lord the king should go to war again,
'He learn'd the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery,
And how to scale a fortress—or a nunnery.

39

But that which Donna Inez most desired,
And saw into herself each day before all
The learned tutors whom for him she hired,
Was, that his breeding should be strictly moral:
Much into all his studies she inquired,
And so they were submitted first to her, all,
Arts, sciences, no branch was made a mystery
To Juan's eyes, excepting natural history.

40

The languages, especially the dead,
The sciences, and most of all the abstruse,
The arts, at least all such as could be said
To be the most remote from common use,
In all these he was much and deeply read:
But not a page of anything that's loose,
Or hints continuation of the species,
Was ever suffer'd, lest he should grow vicious.

41

His classic studies made a little puzzle,
Because of filthy loves of gods and goddesses,
Who in the earlier ages raised a bustle,
But never put on pantaloons or bodices;

His reverend tutors had at times a tussle,
And for their *Æncids*, *Iliads*, and *Odysseys*,
Were forced to make an odd sort of apology,
For Donna Inez dreaded the Mythology.

42

Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him,
Anacreon's morals are a still worse sample,
Catullus scarcely has a decent poem,
I don't think Sappho's Ode a good example,
Although Longinus tells us there is no hymn
Where the sublime soars forth on wings more ample;
But Virgil's songs are pure, except that horrid one
Beginning with 'Formosum Pastor Corydon.'

43

Lucretius' irreligion is too strong
For early stomachs, to prove wholesome food;
I can't help thinking Juvenal was wrong,
Although no doubt his real intent was good,
For speaking out so plainly in his song,
So much indeed as to be downright rude;
And then what proper person can be partial
To all those nauseous epigrams of Martial?

44

Juan was taught from out the best edition,
Expurgated by learned men, who place,
Judiciously, from out the schoolboy's vision,
The grosser parts; but, fearful to deface
Too much their modest bard by this omission,
And pitying sore this mutilated case,
They only add them all in an appendix,
Which saves, in fact, the trouble of an index;

45

For there we have them all 'at one fell swoop.'
Instead of being scatter'd through the pages;
They stand forth marshall'd in a handsome troop,
To meet the ingenuous youth of future ages,

Till some less rigid editor shall stoop
To call them back into their separate cages,
Instead of standing staring all together,
Like garden gods—and not so decent either.

46

The Missal too (it was the family Missal)
Was ornamented in a sort of way
Which ancient mass-books often arc, and this all
Kinds of grotesques illumined; and how they,
Who saw those figures on the margin kiss all,
Could turn their optics to the text and pray,
Is more than I know—But Don Juan's mother
Kept this herself, and gave her son another.

47

Sermons he read, and lectures he endured,
And homilies, and lives of all the saints;
To Jerome and to Chrysostom inured,
He did not take such studies for restraints;
But how faith is acquired, and then insured,
So well not one of the aforesaid paints
As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions,
Which make the reader envy his transgressions.

48

This, too, was a seal'd book to little Juan—
I can't but say that his mamma was right,
If such an education was the true one.
She scarcely trusted him from out her sight;
Her maids were old, and if she took a new one,
You might be sure she was a perfect fright,
She did this during even her husband's life—
I recommend as much to every wife.

49

Young Juan wax'd in godliness and grace;
At six a charming child, and at eleven
With all the promise of as fine a face
As e'er to man's maturer growth was given.

He studied steadily and grew apace,
And seem'd, at least, in the right road to heaven,
For half his days were pass'd at church, the other
Between his tutors, confessor, and mother.

50

At six, I said, he was a charming child,
At twelve he was a fine, but quiet boy;
Although in infancy a little wild,
They tamed him down amongst them: to destroy
His natural spirit not in vain they toil'd,
At least it seem'd so; and his mother's joy
Was to declare how sage, and still, and steady,
Her young philosopher was grown already.

51

I had my doubts, perhaps I have them still,
But what I say is neither here nor there:
I knew his father well, and have some skill
In character—but it would not be fair
From sire to son to augur good or ill:
He and his wife were an ill sorted pair—
But scandal's my aversion—I protest
Against all evil speaking, even in jest.

52

For my part I say nothing—nothing—but
This I will say—my reasons are my own—
That if I had an only son to put
To school (as God be praised that I have none),
'Tis not with Donna Inez I would shut
Him up to learn his catechism alone,
No—no—I'd send him out betimes to college,
For there it was I pick'd up my own knowledge.

53

For there one learns—'tis not for me to boast,
Though I acquired—but I pass over *that*,
As well as all the Greek I since have lost:
I say that there's the place—but '*Verbum sat*,'

I think I pick'd up too, as well as most,
Knowledge of matters—but no matter *what*—
I never married—but, I think, I know
That sons should not be educated so.

54

Young Juan now was sixteen years of age,
Tall, handsome, slender, but well knit: he seem'd
Active, though not so sprightly, as a page;
And everybody but his mother deem'd
Him almost man; but she flew in a rage
And bit her lips (for else she might have scream'd)
If any said so, for to be precocious
Was in her eyes a thing the most atrocious.

55

Amongst her numerous acquaintance, all
Selected for discretion and devotion,
There was the Donna Julia, whom to call
Pretty were but to give a feeble notion
Of many charms in her as natural
As sweetness to the flower, or salt to ocean,
Her zone to Venus, or his bow to Cupid
(But this last simile is trite and stupid).

56

The darkness of her Oriental eye
Accorded with her Moorish origin;
(Her blood was not all Spanish, by the by;
In Spain, you know, this is a sort of sin).
When proud Granada fell, and, forced to fly,
Boabdil wept, of Donna Julia's kin
Some went to Africa, some stay'd in Spain,
Her great great grandmamma chose to remain.

57

She married (I forget the pedigree)
With an Hidalgo, who transmitted down
His blood less noble than such blood should be;
At such alliances his sires would frown,

In that point so precise in each degree
That they bred *in and in*, as might be shown,
Marrying their cousins—nay, their aunts, and nieces,
Which always spoils the breed, if it increascs.

58

This heathenish cross restored the breed again,
Rum'd its blood, but much improved its flesh;
For from a root the ugliest in old Spain
Sprung up a branch as beautiful as fresh;
The sons no more were short, the daughters plain:
But there's a rumour which I fain would hush,
'Tis said that Donna Julia's grandmamma
Produced her Don more heirs at love than law.

59

However this might be, the race went on
Improving still through every generation,
Until it centred in an only son,
Who left an only daughter: my narration
May have suggested that this single one
Could be but Julia (whom on this occasion
I shall have much to speak about), and she
Was married, charming, chaste, and twenty-three.

60

Her eye (I'm very fond of handsome eyes)
Was large and dark, suppressing half its fire
Until she spoke, then through its soft disguise
Flash'd an expression more of pride than ire,
And love than either; and there would arise
A something in them which was not desire,
But would have been, perhaps, but for the soul
Which struggled through and chasten'd down the whole.

61

Her glossy hair was cluster'd o'er a brow
Bright with intelligence, and fair, and smooth;
Her eyebrow's shape was like the aerial bow,
Her cheek all purple with the beam of youth,

Mounting, at times, to a transparent glow,
As if her veins ran lightning; she, in sooth,
Possess'd an air and grace by no means common:
Her stature tall—I hate a dumpy woman.

62

Wedded she was some years, and to a man
Of fifty, and such husbands are in plenty;
And yet, I think, instead of such a ONE
'Twere better to have two of five-and-twenty,
Especially in countries near the sun:
And now I think on't, 'mi vien in mente,'
Ladies even of the most uneasy virtue
Prefer a spouse whose age is short of thirty.

63

'Tis a sad thing, I cannot choose but say,
And all the fault of that indecent sun,
Who cannot leave alone our helpless clay,
But will keep baking, broiling, burning on,
That howsoever people fast and pray,
The flesh is frail, and so the soul undone:
What men call gallantry, and gods adultery,
Is much more common where the climate's sultry.

64

Happy the nations of the moral North!
Where all is virtue, and the winter season
Sends sin, without a rag on, shivering forth
(*'Twas snow that brought St. Anthony to reason*)
Where juries cast up what a wife is worth,
By laying whate'er sum, in mulct, they please on
The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
Because it is a marketable vice.

65

Alfonso was the name of Julia's lord,
A man well looking for his years, and who
Was neither much beloved nor yet abhorr'd:
They lived together as most people do,

Suffering each other's foibles by accord,
And not exactly either *one* or *two*;
Yet he was jealous, though he did not show it,
For jealousy dislikes the world to know it.

66

Julia was—yet I never could see why—
With Donna Inez quite a favourite friend;
Between their tastes there was small sympathy,
For not a line had Julia ever penn'd:
Some people whisper (but, no doubt, they lie,
For malice still imputes some private end)
That Inez had, ere Don Alfonso's marriage,
Forgot with him her very prudent carriage;

67

And that still keeping up the old connexion,
Which time had lately render'd much more chaste,
She took his lady also in affection,
And certainly this course was much the best:
She flatter'd Julia with her sage protection,
And complimented Don Alfonso's taste;
And if she could not (who can?) silence scandal,
At least she left it a more slender handle.

68

I can't tell whether Julia saw the affair
With other people's eyes, or if her own
Discoveries made, but none could be aware
Of this, at least no symptom e'er was shown;
Perhaps she did not know, or did not care,
Indifferent from the first, or callous grown:
I'm really puzzled what to think or say,
She kept her counsel in so close a way.

69

Juan she saw, and, as a pretty chuld,
Caress'd him often—such a thing might be
Quite innocently done, and harmless styled,
When she had twenty years, and thirteen he;

But I am not so sure I should have smiled
When he was sixteen, Julia twenty-three;
These few short years make wondrous alterations,
Particularly amongst sun-burnt nations.

70

Whate'er the cause might be, they had become
Changed; for the dame grew distant, the youth shy,
Their looks cast down, their greetings almost dumb,
And much embarrassment in either eye;
There surely will be little doubt with some
That Donna Julia knew the reason why,
But as for Juan, he had no more notion
Than he who never saw the sea or ocean.

71

Yet Julia's very coldness still was kind,
And tremulously gentle her small hand
Withdrew itself from his, but left behind
A little pressure, thrilling, and so bland
And slight, so very slight, that to the mind
'Twas but a doubt; but ne'er magician's wand
Wrought change with all Armida's fairy art
Like what this light touch left on Juan's heart.

72

And if she met him, though she smiled no more,
She look'd a sadness sweeter than her smile,
As if her heart had deeper thoughts in store
She must not own, but cherish'd more the while
For that compression in its burning core;
Even innocence itself has many a wile,
And will not dare to trust itself with truth,
And love is taught hypocrisy from youth.

73

But passion most dissembles, yet betrays
Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky
Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays
Its workings through the vainly guarded eye,

And in whatever aspect it arrays
Itself, 'tis still the same hypocrisy:
Coldness or anger, even disdain or hate,
Are masks it often wears, and still too late.

74

Then there were sighs, the deeper for suppression,
And stolen glances, sweeter for the theft,
And burning blushes, though for no transgression,
Tremblings when met, and restlessness when left;
All these are little preludes to possession,
Of which young passion cannot be bereft,
And merely tend to show how greatly love is
Embarrass'd at first starting with a novice.

75

Poor Julia's heart was in an awkward state;
She felt it going, and resolved to make
The noblest efforts for herself and mate,
For honour's, pride's, religion's, virtue's sake.
Her resolutions were most truly great,
And almost might have made a Tarquin quake:
She pray'd the Virgin Mary for her grace,
As being the best judge of a lady's case.

76

She vow'd she never would see Juan more,
And next day paid a visit to his mother,
And look'd extremely at the opening door,
Which, by the Virgin's grace, let in another
Grateful she was, and yet a little sore—
Again it opens, it can be no other,
'Tis surely Juan now—No! I'm afraid
That night the Virgin was no further pray'd.

77

She now determined that a virtuous woman
Should rather face and overcome temptation,
That flight was base and dastardly, and no man
Should ever give her heart the least sensation;

That is to say, a thought beyond the common
Preference, that we must feel upon occasion,
For people who are pleasanter than others,
But then they only seem so many brothers.

78

And even if by chance—and who can tell?
The devil's so very sly—she should discover
That all within was not so very well,
And, if still free, that such or such a lover
Might please perhaps, a virtuous wife can quell
Such thoughts, and be the better when they're over;
And if the man should ask, 'tis but denial:
I recommend young ladies to make trial.

79

And then there are such things as love divine,
Bright and immaculate, unmix'd and pure,
Such as the angels think so very fine,
And matrons, who would be no less secure,
Platonic, perfect, 'just such love as mine':
Thus Julia said—and thought so, to be sure;
And so I'd have her think, were I the man
On whom her reveries celestial ran.

80

Such love is innocent, and may exist
Between young persons without any danger:
A hand may first, and then a lip be kist;
For my part, to such doings I'm a stranger,
But *hear* these freedoms form the utmost list
Of all o'er which such love may be a ranger:
If people go beyond, 'tis quite a crime,
But not my fault—I tell them all in time.

81

Love, then, but love within its proper limits
Was Julia's innocent determination
In young Don Juan's favour, and to him its
Exertion might be useful on occasion;

And, lighted at too pure a shrine to dim its
Ethereal lustre, with what sweet persuasion
He might be taught, by love and her together—
I really don't know what, nor Julia either.

82

Fraught with this fine intention, and well fenced
In mail of proof—her purity of soul,
She, for the future of her strength convinced,
And that her honour was a rock, or mole,
Exceeding sagely from that hour dispensed
With any kind of troublesome control;
But whether Julia to the task was equal
Is that which must be mention'd in the sequel.

83

Her plan she deem'd both innocent and feasible,
And, surely, with a stripling of sixteen
Not scandal's fangs could fix on much that's seizable,
Or if they did so, satisfied to mean
Nothing but what was good, her breast was peaceable:
A quiet conscience makes one so serene!
Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded
That all the Apostles would have done as they did.

84

And if in the mean time her husband died,
But Heaven forbid that such a thought should cross
Her brain, though in a dream! (and then she sigh'd)
Never could she survive that common loss;
But just suppose that moment should betide,
I only say suppose it—*inter nos*.
(This should be *entre nous*, for Julia thought
In French, but then the rhyme would go for nought.)

85

I only say, suppose this supposition:
Juan being then grown up to man's estate
Would fully suit a widow of condition,
Even seven years hence it would not be too late;

And in the interim (to pursue this vision)
The mischief, after all, could not be great,
For he would learn the rudiments of love,
I mean the seraph way of those above.

86

So much for Julia. Now we'll turn to Juan.
Poor little fellow! he had no idea
Of his own case, and never hit the true one;
In feelings quick as Ovid's Miss Medea,
He puzzled over what he found a new one,
But not as yet imagined it could be a
Thing quite in course, and not at all alarming,
Which, with a little patience, might grow charming.

87

Silent and pensive, idle, restless, slow,
His home deserted for the lonely wood,
Tormented with a wound he could not know,
His, like all deep grief, plunged in solitude:
I'm fond myself of solitude or so,
But then, I beg it may be understood,
By solitude I mean a Sultan's, not
A hermit's, with a haram for a grot.

88

'Oh Love! in such a wilderness as this,
Where transport and security entwine,
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,
And here thou art a god indeed divine.'
The bard I quote from does not sing amiss,
With the exception of the second line,
For that same twining 'transport and security'
Are twisted to a phrase of some obscurity.

89

The poet meant, no doubt, and thus appeals
To the good sense and senses of mankind,
The very thing which everybody feels,
As all have found on trial, or may find,

That no one likes to be disturb'd at meals
Or love.—I won't say more about 'entwined'
Or 'transport,' as we knew all that before,
But beg 'Security' will bolt the door.

90

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks,
Thinking unutterable things; he threw
Himself at length within the leafy nooks
Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew;
There poets find materials for their books,
And every now and then we read them through,
So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible.

91

He, Juan (and not Wordsworth), so pursued
His self-communion with his own high soul,
Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
Had mitigated part, though not the whole
Of its disease; he did the best he could
With things not very subject to control,
And turn'd, without perceiving his condition,
Like Coleridge, into a metaphysician.

92

He thought about himself, and the whole earth,
Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,
And how the deuce they ever could have birth;
And then he thought of earthquakes, and of wars,
How many miles the moon might have in girth,
Of air-balloons, and of the many bars
To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies;—
And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes.

93

In thoughts like these true wisdom may discern
Longings sublime, and aspirations high,
Which some are born with, but the most part learn
To plague themselves withal, they know not why:

'Twas strange that one so young should thus concern
His brain about the action of the sky;
If *you* think 'twas philosophy that this did,
I can't help thinking puberty assisted.

94

He pored upon the leaves, and on the flowers,
And heard a voice in all the winds; and then
He thought of wood-nymphs and immortal bowers,
And how the goddesses came down to men:
He miss'd the pathway, he forgot the hours,
And when he look'd upon his watch again,
He found how much old Time had been a winner—
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

95

Sometimes he turn'd to gaze upon his book,
Boscan, or Garcilasso;—by the wind
Even as the page is rustled while we look,
So by the poesy of his own mind
Over the mystic leaf his soul was shook,
As if 'twere one whereon magicians bind
Their spells, and give them to the passing gale
According to some good old woman's tale.

96

Thus would he while his lonely hours away
Dissatisfied, nor knowing what he wanted;
Nor glowing reverie, nor poet's lay,
Could yield his spirit that for which it panted,
A bosom whereon he his head might lay,
And hear the heart beat with the love it granted,
With—several other things, which I forget,
Or which, at least, I need not mention yet.

97

Those lonely walks, and lengthening reveries,
Could not escape the gentle Julia's eyes;
She saw that Juan was not at his ease;
But that which chiefly may, and must surprise,

Is, that the Donna Inez did not tease
Her only son with question or surmise;
Whether it was she did not see, or would not,
Or, like all very clever people, could not.

98

This may seem strange, but yet 'tis very common;
For instance—gentlemen, whose ladies take
Leave to o'erstep the written rights of woman,
And break the—Which commandment is't they
break?
(I have forgot the number, and think no man
Should rashly quote, for fear of a mistake.)
I say, when these same gentlemen are jealous,
They make some blunder, which their ladies tell us.

99

A real husband always is suspicious,
But still no less suspects in the wrong place,
Jealous of some one who had no such wishes,
Or pandering blindly to his own disgrace,
By harbouring some dear friend extremely vicious;
The last indeed's infallibly the case:
And when the spouse and friend are gone off who'v,
He wonders at their vice, and not his folly.

100

Thus parents also are at times short-sighted;
Though watchful as the lynx, they ne'er discover,
The while the wicked world beholds delighted,
Young Hopeful's mistress, or Miss Fanny's lover,
Till some confounded escapade has blighted
The plan of twenty years, and all is over;
And then the mother cries, the father swears,
And wonders why the devil he got heirs.

101

But Inez was so anxious, and so clear
Of sight, that I must think, on this occasion,
She had some other motive much more near
For leaving Juan to this new temptation,

But what that motive was, I shan't say here;
Perhaps to finish Juan's education,
Perhaps to open Don Alfonso's eyes,
In case he thought his wife too great a prize.

102

It was upon a day, a summer's day;—
Summer's indeed a very dangerous season,
And so is spring about the end of May;
The sun, no doubt, is the prevailing reason;
But whatsoe'er the cause is, one may say,
And stand convicted of more truth than treason,
That there are months which nature grows more merry
in,—
March has its hares, and May must have its heroine.

103

'Twas on a summer's day—the sixth of June:—
I like to be particular in dates,
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;
They are a sort of post-house, where the Fates
Change horses, making history change its tune,
Then spur away o'er empires and o'er states,
Leaving at last not much besides chronology,
Excepting the post-obits of theology.

104

'Twas on the sixth of June, about the hour
Of half-past six—perhaps still nearer seven—
When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
As e'er held houri in that heathenish heaven
Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon Moore,
To whom the lyre and laurels have been given,
With all the trophies of triumphant song—
He won them well, and may he wear them long!

105

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
How this same interview had taken place,
And even if I knew, I should not tell—
People should hold their tongues in any case;

No matter how or why the thing befell,
But there were she and Juan, face to face—
When two such faces are so, 'twould be wise,
But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

106

How beautiful she look'd! her conscious heart
Glow'd in her cheek, and yet she felt no wrong,
Oh Love! how perfect is thy mystic art,
Strengthening the weak, and trampling on the strong!
How self-deceitful is the sagest part
Of mortals whom thy lure hath led along!—
The precipice she stood on was immense,
So was her creed in her own innocence.

107

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,
And of the folly of all prudish fears,
Victorious virtue, and domestic truth,
And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years:
I wish these last had not occur'd, in sooth,
Because that number rarely much endears,
And through all climes, the snowy and the sunny,
Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in money.

108

When people say, 'I've told you *fifty* times,'
They mean to scold, and very often do;
When poets say, 'I've written *fifty* rhymes,'
They make you dread that they'll recite them too;
In gangs of *fifty*, thieves commit their crimes;
At *fifty* love for love is rare, 'tis true,
But then, no doubt, it equally as true is,
A good deal may be bought for *fifty* Louis.

109

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love
For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,
By all the vows below to powers above,
She never would disgrace the ring she wore,

Nor leave a wish which wisdom might reprove;
And while she ponder'd this, besides much more,
One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
Quite by mistake—she thought it was her own;

110

Unconsciously she lean'd upon the other,
Which play'd within the tangles of her hair;
And to contend with thoughts she could not smother
She seem'd, by the distraction of her air.
'Twas surely very wrong in Juan's mother
To leave together this imprudent pair,
She who for many years had watch'd her son so—
I'm very certain *mine* would not have done so.

111

The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees
Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
As if it said, 'Detain me, if you please';
Yet there's no doubt she only meant to clasp
His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze;
She would have shrunk as from a toad, or asp,
Had she imagined such a thing could rouse
A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse.

112

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
But what he did, is much what you would do;
His young lip thank'd it with a grateful kiss,
And then, abash'd at its own joy, withdrew
In deep despair, lest he had done amiss,—
Love is so very timid when 'tis new:
She blush'd, and frown'd not, but she strove to speak,
And held her tongue, her voice was grown so weak.

113

The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
The devil's in the moon for mischief; they
Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began too soon
Their nomenclature; there is not a day,

The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way,
On which three single hours of moonshine smile—
And then she looks so modest all the while.

II4

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control;
The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor, which is not repose.

II5

And Julia sate with Juan, half embraced
And half retiring from the glowing arm,
Which trembled like the bosom where 'twas placed;
Yet still she must have thought there was no harm,
Or else 'twere easy to withdraw her waist;
But then the situation had its charm,
And then—God knows what next—I can't go on;
I'm almost sorry that I e'er begun.

II6

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
With your confounded fantasies, to more
Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
Your system feigns o'er the controllless core
Of human hearts, than all the long array
Of poets and romancers:—You're a bore,
A charlatan, a coxcomb—and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.

II7

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
Until too late for useful conversation;
The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,
I wish, indeed, they had not had occasion;

But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;
A little still she strove, and much repented,
And whispering 'I will ne'er consent'—consented.

118

'Tis said that Xerxes offer'd a reward
To those who could invent him a new pleasure.
Methinks the requisition's rather hard,
And must have cost his majesty a treasure:
For my part, I'm a moderate-minded bard,
Fond of a little love (which I call leisure);
I care not for new pleasures, as the old
Are quite enough for me, so they but hold.

119

Oh Pleasure! you're indeed a pleasant thing,
Although one must be damn'd for you, no doubt:
I make a resolution every spring
Of reformation, ere the year run out,
But somehow, this my vestal vow takes wing,
Yet still, I trust, it may be kept throughout:
I'm very sorry, very much ashamed,
And mean, next winter, to be quite reclaim'd.

120

Here my chaste Muse a liberty must take—
Start not! still chaster reader—she'll be nice hence-
Forward, and there is no great cause to quake;
This liberty is a poetic licence,
Which some irregularity may make
In the design, and as I have a high sense
Of Aristotle and the Rules, 'tis fit
To beg his pardon when I err a bit.

121

This licence is to hope the reader will
Suppose from June the sixth (the fatal day
Without whose epoch my poetic skill
For want of facts would all be thrown away),

But keeping Julia and Don Juan still
In sight, that several months have pass'd; we'll say
'Twas in November, but I'm not so sure
About the day—the era's more obscure.

122

We'll talk of that anon.—'Tis sweet to hear
At midnight on the blue and moonlit deep
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellow'd, o'er the waters sweep;
'Tis sweet to see the evening star appear;
'Tis sweet to listen as the night-winds creep
From leaf to leaf; 'tis sweet to view on high
The rainbow, based on ocean, span the sky.

123

'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouth'd welcome as we draw near home;
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when we come;
'Tis sweet to be awaken'd by the lark,
Or lull'd by falling waters; sweet the hum
Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of birds,
The lisp of children, and their earliest words.

124

Sweet is the vintage, when the showering grapes
In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth,
Purple and gushing; sweet are our escapes
From civic revelry to rural mirth;
Sweet to the miser are his glittering heaps,
Sweet to the father is his first-born's birth,
Sweet is revenge—especially to women,
Pillage to soldiers, prize-money to seamen.

125

Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
The unexpected death of some old lady
Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
Who've made 'us youth' wait too—too long already

For an estate, or cash, or country seat,
Still breaking, but with stamina so steady
That all the Israelites are fit to mob its
Next owner for their double-damn'd post-obits.

126

'Tis sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels,
By blood or ink; 'tis sweet to put an end
To strife; 'tis sometimes sweet to have our quarrels,
Particularly with a tiresome friend:
Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
Dear is the helpless creature we defend
Against the world; and dear the schoolboy spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

127

But sweeter still than this, than these, than all,
Is first and passionate love—it stands alone,
Like Adam's recollection of his fall;
The tree of knowledge has been pluck'd—all's known—
And life yields nothing further to recall
Worthy of this ambrosial sin, so shown,
No doubt in fable, as the unforgiven
Fire which Prometheus filch'd for us from heaven.

128

Man's a strange animal, and makes strange use
Of his own nature, and the various arts,
And likes particularly to produce
Some new experiment to show his parts;
This is the age of oddities let loose,
Where different talents find their different marts;
You'd best begin with truth, and when you've lost your
Labour, there's a sure market for imposture.

129

What opposite discoveries we have seen!
(Signs of true genius, and of empty pockets.)
One makes new noses, one a guillotine,
One breaks your bones; one sets them in their sockets;

But vaccination certainly has been
A kind antithesis to Congreve's rockets,
With which the Doctor paid off an old pox,
By borrowing a new one from an ox.

130

Bread has been made (indifferent) from potatoes;
And galvanism has set some corpses grinning,
But has not answer'd like the apparatus
Of the Humane Society's beginning,
By which men are unsuffocated gratis:
What wondrous new machines have late been spinning!
I said the small pox has gone out of late;
Perhaps it may be follow'd by the great.

131

'Tis said the great came from America;
Perhaps it may set out on its return,—
The population there so spreads, they say
'Tis grown high time to thin it in its turn,
With war, or plague, or famine, any way,
So that civilisation they may learn;
And which in ravage the more loathsome evil is—
Their real lues, or our pseudo-syphilis?

132

This is the patent age of new inventions
For killing bodics, and for saving souls,
All propagated with the best intentions;
Sir Humphry Davy's lantern, by which coals
Are safely mined for in the mode he mentions,
Tombuctoo travels, voyages to the Poles,
Are ways to benefit mankind, as true,
Perhaps, as shooting them at Waterloo.

133

Man's a phenomenon, one knows not what,
And wonderful beyond all wondrous measure;
'Tis pity though, in this sublime world, that
Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure;

Few mortals know what end they would be at,
But whether glory, power, or love, or treasure,
The path is through perplexing ways, and when
The goal is gain'd, we die, you know—and then——

134

What then?—I do not know, no more do you—
And so good night.—Return we to our story:
'Twas in November, when fine days are few,
And the far mountains wax a little hoary,
And clap a white cape on their mantles blue;
And the sea dashes round the promontory,
And the loud breaker boils against the rock,
And sober suns must set at five o'clock.

135

'Twas, as the watchmen say, a cloudy night;
No moon, no stars, the wind was low or loud
By gusts, and many a sparkling hearth was bright
With the piled wood, round which the family crowd:
There's something cheerful in that sort of light,
Even as a summer sky's without a cloud:
I'm fond of fire, and crickets, and all that,
A lobster salad, and champagne, and chat.

136

'Twas midnight—Donna Julia was in bed,
Sleeping, most probably,—when at her door
Arose a clatter might awake the dead,
If they had never been awoke before,
And that they have been so we all have read,
And are to be so, at the least, once more;—
The door was fasten'd, but with voice and fist
First knocks were heard, then 'Madam—Madam—hist!

137

'For God's sake, Madam—Madam—here's my master,
With more than half the city at his back—
Was ever heard of such a curst disaster!
'Tis not my fault—I kept good watch—Alack!

Do pray undo the bolt a little faster—
They're on the stair just now, and in a crack
Will all be here; perhaps he yet may fly—
Surely the window's not so *very* high!

138

By this time Don Alfonso was arrived,
With torches, friends, and servants in great number;
The major part of them had long been wived,
And therefore paused not to disturb the slumber
Of any wicked woman, who contrived
By stealth her husband's temples to encumber:
Examples of this kind are so contagious,
Were *one* not punish'd, *all* would be outrageous.

139

I can't tell how, or why, or what suspicion
Could enter into Don Alfonso's head;
But for a cavalier of his condition
It surely was exceedingly ill-bred,
Without a word of previous admonition,
To hold a levee round his lady's bed,
And summon lackeys, arm'd with fire and sword,
To prove himself the thing he most abhorr'd.

140

Poor Donna Julia! starting as from sleep
(Mind—that I do not say—she had not slept),
Began at once to scream, and yawn, and weep;
Her maid, Antonia, who was an adept,
Contrived to fling the bed-clothes in a heap,
As if she had just now from out them crept:
I can't tell why she should take all this trouble
To prove her mistress had been sleeping double.

141

But Julia mistress, and Antonia maid,
Appear'd like two poor harmless women, who
Of goblins, but still more of men afraid,
Had thought one man might be deterr'd by two,

And therefore side by side were gently laid,
Until the hours of absence should run through,
And truant husband should return, and say,
'My dear, I was the first who came away.'

142

Now Julia found at length a voice, and cried,
'In heaven's name, Don Alfonso, what d'ye mean?
Has madness seized you? would that I had died
Ere such a monster's victim I had been!
What may this midnight violence betide,
A sudden fit of drunkenness or spleen?
Dare you suspect me, whom the thought would kill?
Search, then, the room!'—Alfonso said, 'I will.'

143

He search'd, *they* search'd, and rummaged everywhere,
Closet and clothes-press, chest and window-seat,
And found much linen, lace, and several pair
Of stockings, slippers, brushes, combs, complete,
With other articles of ladies fair,
To keep them beautiful, or leave them neat:
Arras they prick'd and curtains with their swords,
And wounded several shutters, and some boards.

144

Under the bed they search'd, and there they found—
No matter what—it was not that they sought;
They open'd windows, gazing if the ground
Had signs or footmarks, but the earth said nought;
And then they stared each other's faces round:
'Tis odd, not one of all these seekers thought,
And seems to me almost a sort of blunder,
Of looking *in* the bed as well as under.

145

During this inquisition Julia's tongue
Was not asleep—'Yes, search and search,' she cried,
'Insult on insult heap, and wrong on wrong!
It was for this that I became a bride!

For this in silence I have suffer'd long
A husband like Alfonso at my side;
But now I'll bear no more, nor here remain,
If there be law or lawyers in all Spain.

146

'Yes, Don Alfonso! husband now no more,
If ever you indeed deserved the name,
Is't worthy of your years?—you have threescore—
Fifty, or sixty, it is all the same—
Is't wise or fitting, causeless to explore
For facts against a virtuous woman's fame?
Ungrateful, perjured, barbarous Don Alfonso,
How dare you think your lady would go on so?

147

'Is it for this I have disdain'd to hold
The common privileges of my sex?
That I have chosen a confessor so old
And deaf, that any other it would vex,
And never once he has had cause to scold,
But found my very innocence perplex
So much, he always doubted I was married—
How sorry you will be when I've miscarried!

148

'Was it for this that no Cortejo e'er
I yet have chosen from out the youth of Seville?
Is it for this I scarce went anywhere,
Except to bull-fights, mass, play, rout, and revel?
Is it for this, whate'er my suitors were,
I favour'd none—nay, was almost uncivil?
Is it for this that General Count O'Reilly,
Who took Algiers, declares I used him vilely?

149

'Did not the Italian Musico Cazzani
Sing at my heart six months at least in vain?
Did not his countryman, Count Corniani,
Call me the only virtuous wife in Spain?

Were there not also Russians, English, many?
The Count Strongstroganoff I put in pain,
And Lord Mount Coffeeshouse, the Irish peer,
Who kill'd himself for love (with wine) last year.

150

'Have I not had two bishops at my feet?
The Duke of Ichar, and Don Fernan Nunez?
And is it thus a faithful wife you treat?
I wonder in what quarter now the moon is:
I praise your vast forbearance not to beat
Me also, since the time so opportune is—
Oh, valiant man! with sword drawn and cock'd trigger,
Now, tell me, don't you cut a pretty figure?

151

'Was it for this you took your sudden journey,
Under pretence of business indispensable,
With that sublime of rascals your attorney,
Whom I see standing there, and looking sensible
Of having play'd the fool? though both I spurn, he
Deserves the worst, his conduct's less defensible,
Because, no doubt, 'twas for his dirty fee,
And not from any love to you nor me.

152

'If he comes here to take a deposition,
By all means let the gentleman proceed;
You've made the apartment in a fit condition:—
There's pen and ink for you, sir, when you need—
Let everything be noted with precision,
I would not you for nothing should be fee'd—
But as my maid's undrest, pray turn your spies out.'
'Oh!' sobb'd Antonia, 'I could tear their eyes out.'

153

'There is the closet, there the toilet, there
The antechamber—search them under, over;
There is the sofa, there the great armchair,
The chimney—which would really hold a lover.

I wish to sleep, and beg you will take care
And make no further noise, till you discover
The secret cavern of this lurking treasure—
And when 'tis found, let me, too, have that pleasure.

154

'And now, Hidalgo! now that you have thrown
Doubt upon me, confusion over all,
Pray have the courtesy to make it known
Who is the man you search for? how d'y'e call
Him? what's his lineage? let him but be shown—
I hope he's young and handsome—is he tall?
Tell me—and be assured, that since you stain
Mine honour thus, it shall not be in vain.

155

'At least, perhaps, he has not sixty years,
At that age he would be too old for slaughter,
Or for so young a husband's jealous fears—
(Antonia! let me have a glass of water.)
I am ashamed of having shed these tears,
They are unworthy of my father's daughter;
My mother dream'd not in my natal hour,
That I should fall into a monster's power.

156

'Perhaps 'tis of Antonia you are jealous,
You saw that she was sleeping by my side,
When you broke in upon us with your fellows;
Look where you please—we've nothing, sir, to hide;
Only another time, I trust, you'll tell us,
Or for the sake of decency abide
A moment at the door, that we may be
Drest to receive so much good company.

157

'And now, sir, I have done, and say no more;
The little I have said may serve to show
The guileless heart in silence may grieve o'er
The wrongs to whose exposure it is slow:—

I leave you to your conscience as before,
'Twill one day ask you, *why* you used me so?
God grant you feel not then the bitterest grief!
Antonia! where's my pocket-handkerchief?

158

She ceased, and turn'd upon her pillow; pale
She lay, her dark eyes flashing through their tears,
Like skies that rain and lighten; as a veil,
Waved and o'ershading her wan cheek, appears
Her streaming hair; the black curls strive, but fail,
To hide the glossy shoulder, which uprears
Its snow through all;—her soft lips lie apart,
And louder than her breathing beats her heart.

159

The Senhor Don Alfonso stood confused;
Antonia bustled round the ransack'd room,
And, turning up her nose, with looks abused
Her master, and his myrmidons, of whom
Not one, except the attorney, was amused;
He, like Achates, faithful to the tomb,
So there were quarrels, cared not for the cause,
Knowing they must be settled by the laws.

160

With prying snub-nose, and small eyes, he stood,
Following Antonia's motions here and there,
With much suspicion in his attitude;
For reputations he had little care;
So that a suit or action were made good,
Small pity had he for the young and fair,
And ne'er believed in negatives, till these
Were proved by competent false witnesses.

161

But Don Alfonso stood with downcast looks,
And, truth to say, he made a foolish figure;
When, after searching in five hundred nooks,
And treating a young wife with so much rigour,

He gain'd no point, except some self-rebukes,
Added to those his lady with such vigour
Had pour'd upon him for the last half hour,
Quick, thick, and heavy—as a thunder-shower.

162

At first he tried to hammer an excuse,
To which the sole reply was tears and sobs,
And indications of hysterics, whose
Prologue is always certain throes, and throbs,
Gasps, and whatever else the owners choose:
Alfonso saw his wife, and thought of Job's;
He saw too, in perspective, her relations,
And then he tried to muster all his patience.

163

He stood in act to speak, or rather stammer,
But sage Antonia cut him short before
The anvil of his speech received the hammer,
With 'Pray, sir, leave the room, and say no more,
Or madam dies.'—Alfonso mutter'd, 'D—n her,'
But nothing else, the time of words was o'er;
He cast a rueful look or two, and did,
He knew not wherefore, that which he was bid.

164

With him retired his '*posse comitatus*,
The attorney last, who linger'd near the door
Reluctantly, still tarrying there as late as
Antonia let him—not a little sore
At this most strange and unexplain'd '*hiatus*'
In Don Alfonso's facts, which just now wore
An awkward look; as he revolved the case,
The door was fasten'd in his legal face.

165

No sooner was it bolted, than—Oh shame!
Oh sin! Oh sorrow! and Oh womankind!
How can you do such things and keep your fame,
Unless this world, and t'other too, be blind?

Nothing so dear as an unfilch'd good name!
But to proceed—for there is more behind:
With much heartfelt reluctance be it said,
Young Juan slipp'd, half-smother'd, from the bed.

166

He had been hid—I don't pretend to say
How, nor can I indeed describe the where—
Young, slender, and pack'd easily, he lay,
No doubt, in little compass, round or square;
But pity him I neither must nor may
His suffocation by that pretty pair;
'Twere better, sure, to die so, than be shut
With maudlin Clarence in his Malmsey butt.

167

And, secondly, I pity not, because
He had no business to commit a sin,
Forbid by heavenly, fined by human laws;
At least 'twas rather early to begin;
But at sixteen the conscience rarely gnaws
So much as when we call our old debts in
At sixty years, and draw the accompts of evil,
And find a deuced balance with the devil.

168

Of his position I can give no notion:
'Tis written in the Hebrew Chronicle,
How the physicians, leaving pill and potion,
Prescribed, by way of blister, a young belle,
When old King David's blood grew dull in motion,
And that the medicine answer'd very well;
Perhaps 'twas in a different way applied,
For David lived, but Juan nearly died.

169

What's to be done? Alfonso will be back
The moment he has sent his fools away.
Antonia's skill was put upon the rack,
But no device could be brought into play—

And how to parry the renew'd attack?
Besides, it wanted but few hours of day:
Antonia puzzled; Julia did not speak,
But press'd her bloodless lip to Juan's cheek.

170

He turn'd his lip to hers, and with his hand
Call'd back the tangles of her wandering hair;
Even then their love they could not all command,
And half forgot their danger and despair:
Antonia's patience now was at a stand—
'Come, come, 'tis no time now for fooling there,'
She whisper'd, in great wrath—'I must deposit
This pretty gentleman within the closet:

171

'Pray, keep your nonsense for some luckier night—
Who can have put my master in this mood?
What will become on't—I'm in such a fright,
The devil's in the urchin, and no good—
Is this a time for giggling? this a plight?
Why, don't you know that it may end in blood?
You'll lose your life, and I shall lose my place,
My mistress all, for that half-girlish face.

172

'Had it but been for a stout cavalier
Of twenty-five or thirty—(come, make haste)
But for a child, what piece of work is here!
I really, madam, wonder at your taste—
(Come, sir, get in)—my master must be near:
There, for the present, at the least, he's fast,
And if we can but till the morning keep
Our counsel—(Juan, mind, you must not sleep).'

173

Now, Don Alfonso entering, but alone,
Closed the oration of the trusty maid:
She loiter'd, and he told her to be gone,
An order somewhat sullenly obey'd;

However, present remedy was none,
And no great good seem'd answer'd if she staid;
Regarding both with slow and sidelong view,
She snuff'd the candle, curtsied, and withdrew.

174

Alfonso paused a minute—then begun
Some strange excuses for his late proceeding:
He would not justify what he had done,
To say the best, it was extreme ill-breeding;
But there were ample reasons for it, none
Of which he specified in this his pleading:
His speech was a fine sample, on the whole,
Of rhetoric, which the learn'd call '*rigmarole*.'

175

Julia said nought; though all the while there rose
A ready answer, which at once enables
A matron, who her husband's foible knows,
By a few timely words to turn the tables,
Which, if it does not silence, still must pose,—
Even if it should comprise a pack of fables;
'Tis to retort with firmness, and when he
Suspects with *one*, do you reproach with *three*.

176

Julia, in fact, had tolerable grounds,—
Alfonso's loves with Inez were well known;
But whether 'twas that one's own guilt confounds—
But that can't be, as has been often shown,
A lady with apologies abounds;—
It might be that her silence sprang alone
From delicacy to Don Juan's ear,
To whom she knew his mother's fame was dear.

177

There might be one more motive, which makes two,
Alfonso n'er to Juan had alluded,—
Mentioned his jealousy, but never who
Had been the happy lover, he concluded,

Conceal'd amongst his premises; 'tis true,
His mind the more o'er this its mystery brooded:
To speak of Inez now were, one may say,
Like throwing Juan in Alfonso's way.

178

A hint, in tender cases, is enough;
Silence is best: besides there is a *tact*—
(That modern phrase appears to me sad stuff,
But it will serve to keep my verse compact)—
Which keeps, when push'd by questions rather rough,
A lady always distant from the fact:
The charming creatures lie with such a grace,
There's nothing so becoming to the face.

179

They blush, and we believe them, at least I
Have always done so; 'tis of no great use,
In any case, attempting a reply,
For then their eloquence grows quite profuse;
And when at length they're out of breath, they sigh,
And cast their languid eyes down, and let loose
A tear or two, and then we make it up;
And then—and then—and then—sit down and sup.

180

Alfonso closed his speech, and begg'd her pardon,
Which Julia half withheld, and then half granted,
And laid conditions, he thought very hard, on,
Denying several little things he wanted:
He stood like Adam lingering near his garden,
With useless penitence perplex'd and haunted,
Beseeching she no further would refuse,
When, lo! he stumbled o'er a pair of shoes.

181

A pair of shoes!—what then? not much, if they
Are such as fit with ladies' feet, but these
(No one can tell how much I grieve to say)
Were masculine; to see them, and to seize:

Was but a moment's act.—Ah! well—a-day!
My teeth begin to chatter, my veins freeze—
Alfonso first examined well their fashion,
And then flew out into another passion.

182

He left the room for his relinquish'd sword,
And Julia instant to the closet flew.
'Fly, Juan, fly! for heaven's sake—not a word—
The door is open—you may yet slip through
The passage you so often have explored—
Here is the garden-key—Fly—fly—Adieu!
Haste—haste! I hear Alfonso's hurrying feet—
Day has not broke—there's no one in the street.'

183

None can say that this was not good advice,
The only mischief was, it came too late;
Of all experience 'tis the usual price,
A sort of income-tax laid on by fate:
Juan had reach'd the room-door in a trice,
And might have done so by the garden-gate,
But met Alfonso in his dressing-gown,
Who threaten'd death—so Juan knock'd him down.

184

Dire was the scuffle, and out went the light;
Antonia cried out 'Rape!' and Julia 'Fire!'
But not a servant stirr'd to aid the fight.
Alfonso, pommell'd to his heart's desire,
Swore lustily he'd be revenged this night;
And Juan, too, blasphemed an octave higher;
His blood was up: though young, he was a Tartar,
And not at all disposed to prove a martyr.

185

Alfonso's sword had dropp'd ere he could draw it,
And they continued battling hand to hand,
For Juan very luckily ne'er saw it;
His temper not being under great command,

If at that moment he had chanced to claw it,
Alfonso's days had not been in the land
Much longer.—Think of husbands', lovers' lives!
And how ye may be doubly widows—wives!

186

Alfonso grappled to detain the foe,
And Juan throttled him to get away,
And blood ('twas from the nose) began to flow;
At last, as they more faintly wrestling lay,
Juan contrived to give an awkward blow,
And then his only garment quite gave way;
He fled, like Joseph, leaving it; but there,
I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair.

187

Lights came at length, and men, and maids, who found
An awkward spectacle their eyes before;
Antonia in hysterics, Julia swoon'd,
Alfonso leaning, breathless, by the door;
Some half-torn drapery scatter'd on the ground,
Some blood, and several footsteps, but no more:
Juan the gate gain'd, turn'd the key about,
And liking not the inside, lock'd the out.

188

Here ends this canto.—Need I sing, or say,
How Juan, naked, favour'd by the night,
Who favours what she should not, found his way,
And reach'd his home in an unseemly plight?
The pleasant scandal which arose next day,
The nine days' wonder which was brought to light,
And how Alfonso sued for a divorce,
Were in the English newspapers, of course.

189

If you would like to see the whole proceedings,
The depositions and the cause at full,
The names of all the witnesses, the pleadings
Of counsel to nonsuit, or to annul,

There's more than one edition, and the readings
Are various, but they none of them are dull;
The best is that in short-hand ta'en by Gurney,
Who to Madrid on purpose made a journey.

190

But Donna Inez, to divert the train
Of one of the most circulating scandals
That had for centuries been known in Spain,
At least since the retirement of the Vandals,
First vow'd (and never had she vow'd in vain)
To Virgin Mary several pounds of candles;
And then, by the advice of some old ladies,
She sent her son to be shipp'd off from Cadiz.

191

She had resolved that he should travel through
All European climes, by land or sea,
To mend his former morals, and get new,
Especially in France and Italy
(At least this is the thing most people do).
Julia was sent into a convent: she
Grieved, but, perhaps, her feelings may be better
Shown in the following copy of her Letter:—

192

'They tell me 'tis decided you depart:
'Tis wise—'tis well, but not the less a pain;
I have no further claim on your young heart,
Mine is the victim, and would be again:
To love too much has been the only art
I used;—I write in haste, and if a stain
Be on this sheet, 'tis not what it appears;
My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

193

'I loved, I love you, for this love have lost
State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem,
And yet cannot regret what it hath cost,
So dear is still the memory of that dream;

Yet, if I name my guilt, 'tis not to boast,
None can deem harshlier of me than I deem:
I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest—
I've nothing to reproach or to request.

194

'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these cannot estrange;
Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.

195

'You will proceed in pleasure, and in pride,
Beloved and loving many; all is o'er
For me on earth, except some years to hide
My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core:
These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
The passion which still rages as before,—
And so farewell—forgive me, love me—No,
That word is idle now—but let it go.

196

'My breast has been all weakness, is so yet;
But still I think I can collect my mind;
My blood still rushes where my spirit's set,
As roll the waves before the settled wind;
My heart is feminine, nor can forget—
To all, except one image, madly blind;
So shakes the needle, and so stands the pole,
As vibrates my fond heart to my fix'd soul.

197

'I have no more to say, but linger still,
And dare not set my seal upon this sheet,
And yet I may as well the task fulfil.
My misery can scarce be more complete:

DON JUAN

I had not lived till now, could sorrow kill;
Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet,
And I must even survive this last adieu,
And bear with life to love and pray for you!

198

This note was written upon gilt-edged paper
With a neat little crow-quill, slight and new;
Her small white hand could hardly reach the taper,
It trembled as magnetic needles do,
And yet she did not let one tear escape her;
The seal a sun-flower; '*Elle vous suit partout*,'
The motto, cut upon a white cornelian;
The wax was superfine, its hue vermillion.

199

This was Don Juan's earliest scrape; but whether
I shall proceed with his adventures is
Dependent on the public altogether;
We'll see, however, what they say to this,
Their favour in an author's cap's a feather,
And no great mischief's done by their caprice;
And if their approbation we experience,
Perhaps they'll have some more about a year hence.

200

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books; each book containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
A list of ships, and captains, and kings reigning,
New characters; the episodes are three:
A panoramic view of hell's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer.

201

All these things will be specified in time,
With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
Which makes so many poets, and some fools:

Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of rhyme,
Good workmen never quarrel with their tools;
I've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

202

There's only one slight difference between
Me and my epic brethren gone before,
And here the advantage is my own, I ween
(Not that I have not several merits more,
But this will more peculiarly be seen);
They so embellish, that 'tis quite a bore
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
Whereas this story's actually true.

203

If any person doubt it, I appeal
To history, tradition, and to facts,
To newspapers, whose truth all know and feel,
To plays in five, and operas in three acts;
All these confirm my statement a good deal,
But that which more completely faith exacts
Is, that myself, and several now in Seville,
Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.

204

If ever I should condescend to prose,
I'll write poetical commandments, which
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
That went before; in these I shall enrich
My text with many things that no one knows,
And carry precept to the highest pitch:
I'll call the work 'Longinus o'er a Bottle,
Or, Every Poet his *own* Aristotle.'

205

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy:

405

With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
And Campbell's Hippocrene is somewhat drouthy;
Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers, nor
Commit—firtation with the muse of Moore.

206

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,
His Pegasus, nor anything that's his;
Thou shalt not bear false witness like 'the Blues'—
(There's *one*, at least, is very fond of this);
Thou shalt not write, in short, but what I choose;
This is true criticism, and you may kiss—
Exactly as you please, or not,—the rod;
But if you don't, I'll lay it on, by G—d!

207

If any person should presume to assert
This story is not moral, first, I pray,
That they will not cry out before they're hurt,
Then that they'll read it o'er again, and say
(But, doubtless, nobody will be so pert),
That this is not a moral tale, though gay;
Besides, in Canto Twelfth, I mean to show
The very place where wicked people go.

208

If, after all, there should be some so blind
To their own good this warning to despise,
Led by some tortuosity of mind,
Not to believe my verse and their own eyes,
And cry that they 'the moral cannot find,'
I tell him, if a clergyman, he lies;
Should captains the remark, or critics, make,
They also lie too—under a mistake.

209

The public approbation I expect,
And beg they'll take my word about the moral,
Which I with their amusement will connect
(So children cutting teeth receive a coral);

Meantime they'll doubtless please to recollect
 My epical pretensions to the laurel:
 For fear some prudish readers should grow skittish,
 I've bribed my Grandmother's Review—the British.

210

I sent it in a letter to the Editor,
 Who thank'd me duly by return of post—
 I'm for a handsome article his creditor;
 Yet, if my gentle Muse he please to roast,
 And break a promise after having made it her,
 Denying the receipt of what it cost,
 And smear his page with gall instead of honey,
 All I can say is—that he had the money.

211

I think that with this holy new alliance
 I may ensure the public, and defy
 All other magazines of art or science,
 Daily, or monthly, or three monthly; I
 Have not essay'd to multiply their clients,
 Because they tell me 'twere in vain to try,
 And that the Edinburgh Review and Quarterly
 Treat a dissenting author very martyrly.

212

*'Non ego hoc ferrem calida juventa
 Consule Plauco,'* Horace said, and so
 Say I; by which quotation there is meant a
 Hint that some six or seven good years ago
 (Long ere I dreamt of dating from the Brenta)
 I was most ready to return a blow,
 And would not brook at all this sort of thing
 In my hot youth—when George the Third was King.

213

But now at thirty years my hair is grey—
 (I wonder what it will be like at forty?
 I thought of a peruke the other day—)
 My heart is not much greener; and, in short, I

Have squander'd my whole summer while 'twas May,
And feel no more the spirit to retort; I
Have spent my life, both interest and principal,
And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul invincible.

214

No more—no more—Oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew,
Which out of all the lovely things we see
Extracts emotions beautiful and new;
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the bee.
Think'st thou the honey with those objects grew?
Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy power
To double even the sweetness of a flower.

215

No more—no more—Oh! never more, my heart,
Canst thou be my sole world, my universe!
Once all in all, but now a thing apart,
Thou canst not be my blessing or my curse:
The illusion's gone for ever, and thou art
Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,
And in thy stead I've got a deal of judgment,
Though heaven knows how it ever found a lodgment.

216

My days of love are over; me no more
The charms of maid, wife, and still less of widow,
Can make the fool of which they made before,—
In short, I must not lead the life I did do;
The credulous hope of mutual minds is o'er,
The copious use of claret is forbid too,
So for a good old-gentlemanly vice,
I think I must take up with avarice.

217

Ambition was my idol, which was broken
Before the shrines of Sorrow, and of Pleasure;
And the two last have left me many a token
O'er which reflection may be made at leisure;

Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head, I've spoken,
 'Time is, Time was, Time's past':—a chymic treasure
Is glittering youth, which I have spent betimes—
My heart in passion, and my head on rhymes.

218

What is the end of fame? 'tis but to fill
 A certain portion of uncertain paper:
Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
 Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in vapour;
For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,
 And bards burn what they call their 'midnight taper,'
To have, when the original is dust,
A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.

219

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's King
 Cheops erected the first pyramid
And largest, thinking it was just the thing
 To keep his memory whole, and mummy hid:
But somebody or other rummaging,
 Burglariously broke his coffin's lid:
Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops.

220

But I, being fond of true philosophy,
 Say very often to myself, 'Alas!
All things that have been born were born to die,
 And flesh (which Death mows down to hay) is grass;
You've pass'd your youth not so unpleasantly,
 And if you had it o'er again—'twould pass—
So thank your stars that matters are no worse,
And read your Bible, sir, and mind your purse.'

221

But for the present, gentle reader! and
 Still gentler purchaser! the bard—that's I—
Must, with permission, shake you by the hand,
 And so your humble servant, and good-bye!

We meet again, if we should understand
Each other; and if not, I shall not try
Your patience further than by this short sample—
’Twere well if others follow’d my example.

222

‘Go, little book, from this my solitude!
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways!
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.’
When Southey’s read, and Wordsworth understood,
I can’t help putting in my claim to praise—
The four first rhymes are Southey’s, every line:
For God’s sake, reader! take them not for mine!

CANTO THE SECOND¹

I

Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations,
Holland, France, England, Germany, or Spain,
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,
It mends their morals, never mind the pain:
The best of mothers and of educations
In Juan's case were but employ'd in vain,
Since, in a way that's rather of the oddest, he
Became divested of his native modesty.

2

Had he but been placed at a public school,
In the third form, or even in the fourth,
His daily task had kept his fancy cool,
At least, had he been nurtured in the north;
Spain may prove an exception to the rule,
But then exceptions always prove its worth—
A lad of sixteen causing a divorce
Puzzled his tutors very much, of course.

3

I can't say that it puzzles me at all,
If all things be consider'd; first, there was
His lady-mother, mathematical,
A ——— never mind;—his tutor, an old ass;
A pretty woman—(that's quite natural,
Or else the thing had hardly come to pass)
A husband rather old, not much in unity
With his young wife—a time, and opportunity.

4

Well—well; the world must turn upon its axis,
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;

¹ ['Begun at Venice, December 13, 1818,—finished January 20, 1819.'—B.]

The king commands us, and the doctor quacks us,
The priest instructs, and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust,—perhaps a name.

5

I said, that Juan had been sent to Cadiz—
A pretty town, I recollect it well—
'Tis there the mart of the colonial trade is,
(Or was, before Peru learn'd to rebel,)
And such sweet girls—I mean, such graceful ladies,
Their very walk would make your bosom swell;
I can't describe it, though so much it strike,
Nor liken it—I never saw the like:

6

An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb
New broke, a camelpard, a gazelle,
No—none of these will do;—and then their garb,
Their veil and petticoat—Alas! to dwell
Upon such things would very near absorb
A canto—then their feet and ankles,—well,
Thank Heaven I've got no metaphor quite ready,
(And so, my sober Muse—come, let's be steady—

7

Chaste Muse!—well, if you must, you must)—the veil
Thrown back a moment with the glancing hand,
While the o'erpowering eye, that turns you pale,
Flashes into the heart:—All sunny land
Of love! when I forget you, may I fail
To — say my prayers—but never was there plann'd
A dress through which the eyes give such a volley,
Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli.

8

But to our tale: the Donna Inez sent
Her son to Cadiz only to embark;
To stay there had not answer'd her intent,
But why?—we leave the reader in the dark—

'Twas for a voyage the young man was meant,
As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
To wean him from the wickedness of earth,
And send him like a dove of promise forth.

9

Don Juan bade his valet pack his things
According to direction, then received
A lecture and some money: for four springs
He was to travel; and though Inez grieved
(As every kind of parting has its stings),
She hoped he would improve—perhaps believed:
A letter, too, she gave (he never read it)
Of good advice—and two or three of credit.

10

In the mean time, to pass her hours away,
Brave Inez now set up a Sunday school
For naughty children, who would rather play
(Like truant rogues) the devil, or the fool;
Infants of three years old were taught that day,
Dunces were whipt, or set upon a stool:
The great success of Juan's education
Spurr'd her to teach another generation.

11

Juan embark'd—the ship got under way,
The wind was fair, the water passing rough;
A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
As I, who've cross'd it oft, know well enough;
And, standing upon deck, the dashing spray
Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-tough:
And there he stood to take, and take again,
His first—perhaps his last—farewell of Spain.

12

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
To see one's native land receding through
The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
Especially when life is rather new:

I recollect Great Britain's coast looks white,
But almost every other country's blue,
When gazing on them, mystified by distance,
We enter on our nautical existence.

13

So Juan stood, bewilder'd on the deck:
The wind sung, cordage strain'd, and sailors swore,
And the ship creak'd, the town became a speck,
From which away so fair and fast they bore.
The best of remedies is a beef-steak
Against sea-sickness: try it, sir, before
You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
For I have found it answer—so may you.

14

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the stern,
Beheld his native Spain receding far:
First partings form a lesson hard to learn,
Even nations feel this when they go to war;
There is a sort of unexpressed concern,
A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar:
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places, one keeps looking at the steeple.

15

But Juan had got many things to leave,
His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
So that he had much better cause to grieve
Than many persons more advanced in life;
And if we now and then a sigh must heave
At quitting even those we quit in strife,
No doubt we weep for those the heart endears—
That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears.

16

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
By Babel's waters, still remembering Sion:
I'd weep,—but mine is not a weeping Muse,
And such light griefs are not a thing to die on;

Young men should travel, if but to amuse
Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto.

17

And Juan wept, and much he sigh'd and thought,
While his salt tears dropp'd into the salt sea,
'Sweets to the sweet;' (I like so much to quote,
You must excuse this extract,—'tis where she
The Queen of Denmark, for Ophelia brought
Flowers to the grave;) and, sobbing often, he
Reflected on his present situation,
And seriously resolved on reformation.

18

'Farewell, my Spain! a long farewell!' he cried,
'Perhaps I may revisit thee no more,
But die, as many an exiled heart hath died,
Of its own thirst to see again thy shore:
Farewell, where Guadalquivir's waters glide!
Farewell, my mother! and, since all is o'er,
Farewell, too, dearest Julia!—(here he drew
Her letter out again, and read it through.)

19

And oh! if e'er I should forget, I swear—
But that's impossible, and cannot be—
Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
Than I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
Or think of anything, excepting thee;
A mind diseased no remedy can physic—
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick.)

20

'Sooner shall heaven kiss earth—(here he fell sick)
Oh, Julia! what is every other woe?—
(For God's sake let me have a glass of liquor;
Pedro, Battista, help me down below.)

Julia, my love—(you rascal, Pedro, quicker)—
Oh, Julia!—(this curst vessel pitches so)—
Beloved Julia, hear me still beseeching!'
(Here he grew inarticulate with retching.)

21

He felt that chilling heaviness of heart,
Or rather stomach, which, alas! attends,
Beyond the best apothecary's art,
The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
Or death of those we dote on, when a part
Of us dies with them as each fond hope ends:
No doubt he would have been much more pathetic,
But the sea acted as a strong emetic.

22

Love's a capricious power: I've known it hold
Out through a fever caused by its own heat,
But be much puzzled by a cough and cold,
And find a quinsy very hard to treat;
Against all noble maladies he's bold,
But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,
Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,
Nor inflammations redden his blind eye.

23

But worst of all is nausea, or a pain
About the lower region of the bowels;
Love, who heroically breathes a vein,
Shrinks from the application of hot towels,
And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,
Sea-sickness death: his love was perfect, how else
Could Juan's passion, while the billows roar,
Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before?

24

The ship, call'd the most holy 'Trinidad,'
Was steering duly for the port Leghorn;
For there the Spanish family Moncada
Were settled long ere Juan's sire was born:

They were relations, and for them he had a
Letter of introduction, which the morn
Of his departure had been sent him by
His Spanish friends for those in Italy.

25

His suite consisted of three servants and
A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
Who several languages did understand,
But now lay sick and speechless on his pillow,
And, rocking in his hammock, long'd for land,
His headache being increased by every billow;
And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
His berth a little damp, and him afraid.

26

'Twas not without some reason, for the wind
Increased at night, until it blew a gale;
And though 'twas not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have look'd a little pale,
For sailors are, in fact, a different kind:
At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky show'd it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so.

27

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift
Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern-frame, and, ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away: 'twas time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found.

28

One gang of people instantly was put
Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not;
But they could not come at the leak as yet;

At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush'd through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,

29

Into the opening; but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps: I'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they all had been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

30

As day advanced the weather seem'd to abate,
And then the leak they reckon'd to reduce,
And keep the ship afloat, though three feet yet
Kept two hand- and one chain-pump still in use.
The wind blew fresh again: as it grew late
A squall came on, and while some guns broke loose,
A gust—which all descriptive power transcends—
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam ends.

31

There she lay, motionless, and seem'd upset;
The water left the hold, and wash'd the decks,
And made a scene men do not soon forget;
For they remember battles, fires, and wrecks,
Or any other thing that brings regret,
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks;
Thus drownings are much talk'd of by the divers,
And swimmers, who may chance to be survivors.

32

Immediately the masts were cut away,
Both main and mizen: first the mizen went,
The main-mast follow'd; but the ship still lay
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.

Foremast and bowsprit were cut down, and they
Eased her at last (although we never meant
To part with all till every hope was blighted),
And then with violence the old ship righted.

33

It may be easily supposed, while this
Was going on, some people were unquiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from the cask.

34

There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
As rum and true religion: thus it was,
Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some sung psalms,
The high wind made the treble, and as bass
The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright cured the qualms
Of all the luckless landmen's sea-sick maws:
Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

35

Perhaps more mischief had been done, but for
Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his years,
Got to the spirit-room, and stood before
It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,
As if Death were more dreadful by his door
Of fire than water, spite of oaths and tears,
Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they sunk,
Thought it would be becoming to die drunk.

36

'Give us more grog,' they cried, 'for it will be
All one an hour hence.' Juan answer'd, 'No!
'Tis true that death awaits both you and me,
But let us die like men, not sink below

Like brutes':—and thus his dangerous post kept he,
And none liked to anticipate the blow;
And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

37

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
And made a loud and pious lamentation;
Repented all his sins, and made a last
Irrevocable vow of reformation;
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril past)
To quit his academic occupation,
In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.

38

But now there came a flash of hope once more;
Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the masts were gone;
The leak increased; shoals round her, but no shore,
The vessel swam, yet still she held her own.
They tried the pumps again, and though before
Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless grown,
A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to bale—
The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd a sail.

39

Under the vessel's keel the sail was pass'd,
And for a moment it had some effect;
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,
Nor rag of canvas, what could they expect?
But still 'tis best to struggle to the last,
'Tis never too late to be wholly wreck'd:
And though 'tis true that man can only die once,
'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

40

There winds and waves had hurl'd them, and from thence,
Without their will, they carried them away;
For they were forced with steering to dispense,
And never had as yet a quiet day

On which they might repose, or even commence
A juryinast or rudder, or could say
The ship would swim an hour, which, by good luck,
Still swam—though not exactly like a duck.

41

The wind, in fact, perhaps, was rather less,
But the ship labour'd so, they scarce could hope
To weather out much longer; the distress
Was also great with which they had to cope
For want of water, and their solid mess
Was scant enough: in vain the telescope
Was used—nor sail nor shore appear'd in sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming night.

42

Again the weather threaten'd,—again blew
A gale, and in the fore and after hold
Water appear'd; yet, though the people knew
All this, the most were patient, and some bold,
Until the chains and leathers were worn through
Of all our pumps.—a wreck complete she roll'd,
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
Like human beings during civil war.

43

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain, he
Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a stormy sea,
And if he wept at length, they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and children,
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.

44

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head; and, all distinction gone,
Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints—but there were none

To pay them with; and some look'd o'er the bow;
Some hoisted out the boats; and there was one
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd—in his confusion.

45

Some lash'd them in their hammocks; some put on
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;
Some cursed the day on which they saw the sun,
And gnash'd their teeth, and howling, tore their hair;
And others went on as they had begun,
Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

46

The worst of all was, that in their condition,
Having been several days in great distress,
'Twas difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffering less:
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;
Their stock was damaged by the weather's stress:
'Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the cutter.

47

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured by the wet;
Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine: and they contrived to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,
But scarce enough to serve them for a luncheon—
Then there was rum, eight gallons in a puncheon.

48

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
As there were but two blankets for a sail,

And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
Threw in by good luck over the ship's rail;
And two boats could not hold, far less be stored,
To save one half the people then on board.

49

'Twas twilight, and the sunless day went down
Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
Of one whose hate is mask'd but to assail.
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown,
And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

50

Some trial had been making at a raft,
With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laugh'd,
If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaff'd,
And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical, and half hysterical:—
Their preservation would have been a miracle.

51

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hen-coops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great use:
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost—sunk, in short.

52

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell—
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave—
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;

And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

53

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd,
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

54

The boats, as stated, had got off before,
And in them crowded several of the crew;
And yet their present hope was hardly more
Than what it had been, for so strong it blew
There was slight chance of reaching any shore;
And then they were too many, though so few
Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
Were counted in them when they got afloat.

55

All the rest perish'd; near two hundred souls
Had left their bodies; and what's worse, alas!
When over Catholics the ocean rolls,
They must wait several weeks before a mass
Takes off one peck of purgatorial coals,
Because, till people know what's come to pass,
They won't lay out their money on the dead—
It costs three francs for every mass that's said.

56

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
Contrived to help Pedrillo to a place;
It seem'd as if they had exchanged their care,
For Juan wore the magisterial face

Which courage gives, while poor Pedrillo's pair
Of eyes were crying for their owner's care:
Battista, though (a name call'd shortly Tita),
Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.

57

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
But the same cause, conducive to his loss,
Left him so drunk, he jump'd into the wave,
As o'er the cutter's edge he tried to cross,
And so he found a wine-and-watery grave;
They could not rescue him although so close,
Because the sea ran higher every minute,
And for the boat—the crew kept crowding in it.

58

A small old spaniel—which had been Don José's,
His father's, whom he loved, as ye may think,
For on such things the memory reposes
With tenderness—stood howling on the brink,
Knowing, (dogs have such intellectual noses!)
No doubt, the vessel was about to sink;
And Juan caught him up, and ere he stepp'd
Off threw him in, then after him he leap'd.

59

He also stuff'd his money where he could
About his person, and Pedrillo's too,
Who let him do, in fact, whate'er he would,
Not knowing what himself to say, or do,
As every rising wave his dread renew'd;
But Juan, trusting they might still get through,
And deeming there were remedies for any ill,
Thus re-embark'd his tutor and his spaniel.

60

'Twas a rough night, and blew so stiffly yet,
That the sail was becalm'd between the seas,
Though on the wave's high top too much to set,
They dared not take it in for all the breeze:

Each sea curl'd o'er the stern, and kept them wet,
And made them bale without a moment's ease,
So that themselves as well as hopes were damp'd,
And the poor little cutter quickly swamp'd.

61

Nine souls more went in her: the long-boat still
Kept above water, with an oar for mast,
Two blankets stitch'd together, answering ill
Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast:
Though every wave roll'd menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpass'd,
They grieved for those who perish'd with the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.

62

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
Of the continuance of the gale: to run
Before the sea until it should grow fine,
Was all that for the present could be done:
A few tea-spoonfuls of their rum and wine
Were served out to the people, who begun
To faint, and damaged bread wet through the bags,
And most of them had little clothes but rags.

63

They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or exertion;
They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numb'd with the immersion,
While t'other half were laid down in their place,
At watch and watch; thus, shivering like the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they fill'd their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat.

64

'Tis very certain the desire of life
Prolongs it: this is obvious to physicians,
When patients, neither plagued with friends nor wife,
Survive through very desperate conditions,

Because they still can hope, nor shines the knife
Nor shears of Atropos before their visions:
Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
And makes men's miseries of alarming brevity.

65

'Tis said that persons living on annuities
Are longer lived than others,—God knows why,
Unless to plague the grantors,—yet so true it is,
That some, I really think, *do* never die;
Of any creditors the worst a Jew it is,
And *that's* their mode of furnishing supply:
In my young days they lent me cash that way,
Which I found very troublesome to pay.

66

'Tis thus with people in an open boat,
They live upon the love of life, and bear
More than can be believed, or even thought,
And stand like rocks the tempest's wear and tear;
And hardship still has been the sailor's lot,
Since Noah's ark went cruising here and there;
She had a curious crew as well as cargo,
Like the first old Greek privateer, the Argo.

67

But man is a carnivorous production,
And must have meals, at least one meal a day;
He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey;
Although his anatomical construction
Bears vegetables, in a grumbling way,
Your labouring people think beyond all question
Beef, veal, and mutton, better for digestion.

68

And thus it was with this our hapless crew;
For on the third day there came on a calm,
And though at first their strength it might renew,
And lying on their weariness like balm,

Lull'd them like turtles sleeping on the blue
Of ocean, when they woke they felt a qualm,
And fell all ravenously on their provision,
Instead of hoarding it with due precision.

69

The consequence was easily foreseen—
They ate up all they had, and drank their wine,
In spite of all remonstrances, and then
On what, in fact, next day were they to dine?
They hoped the wind would rise, these foolish men!
And carry them to shore; these hopes were fine,
But as they had but one oar, and that brittle,
It would have been more wise to save their victual.

70

The fourth day came, but not a breath of air,
And Ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child:
The fifth day, and their boat lay floating there,
The sea and sky were blue, and clear, and mild—
With their one oar (I wish they had had a pair)
What could they do? and hunger's rage grew wild:
So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
Was kill'd, and portion'd out for present eating.

71

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
And Juan, who had still refused, because
The creature was his father's dog that died,
Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,
With some remorse received (though first denied)
As a great favour one of the fore-paws,
Which he divided with Pedrillo, who
Devour'd it, longing for the other too.

72

The seventh day, and no wind—the burning sun
Blister'd and scorch'd, and, stagnant on the sea,
They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
Save in the breeze that came not: savagely

They glared upon each other—all was done,
Water, and wine, and food,—and you might see
The longings of the cannibal arise
(Although they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes.

73

At length one whisper'd his companion who
Whisper'd another, and thus it went round,
And then into a hoarser murmur grew,
An ominous, and wild, and desperate sound;
And when his comrade's thought each sufferer knew,
'Twas but his own, suppress'd till now, he found:
And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,
And who should die to be his fellow's food.

74

But ere they came to this, they that day shared
Some leathern caps, and what remain'd of shoes;
And then they look'd around them, and despair'd,
And none to be the sacrifice would choose;
At length the lots were torn up, and prepared,
But of materials that must shock the Muse—
Having no paper, for the want of better,
They took by force from Juan Julia's letter.

75

Then lots were made, and mark'd, and mix'd, and handed
In silent horror, and their distribution
Lull'd even the savage hunger which demanded,
Like the Promethean vulture, this pollution;
None in particular had sought or plann'd it,
'Twas Nature gnaw'd them to this resolution,
By which none were permitted to be neuter—
And the lot fell on Juan's luckless tutor.

76

He but requested to be bled to death:
The surgeon had his instruments, and bled
Pedrillo, and so gently ebb'd his breath,
You hardly could perceive when he was dead.

He died as born, a Catholic in faith,
Like most in the belief in which they're bred,
And first a little crucifix he kiss'd,
And then held out his jugular and wrist.

77

The surgeon, as there was no other fee,
Had his first choice of morsels for his pains;
But being thirstiest at the moment, he
Preferr'd a draught from the fast-flowing veins:
Part was divided, part thrown in the sea,
And such things as the entrails and the brains
Regaled two sharks, who follow'd o'er the billow—
The sailors ate the rest of poor Pedrillo.

78

The sailors ate him, all save three or four,
Who were not quite so fond of animal food;
To these was added Juan, who, before
Refusing his own spaniel, hardly could
Feel now his appetite increased much more;
'Twas not to be expected that he should,
Even in extremity of their disaster,
Dine with them on his pastor and his master.

79

'Twas better that he did not; for, in fact,
The consequence was awful in the extreme;
For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
Went raging mad—Lord! how they did blaspheme!
And foam, and roll, with strange convulsions rack'd,
Drinking salt-water like a mountain-stream;
Tearing, and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyæna-laughter, died despairing.

80

Their numbers were much thinn'd by this infliction,
And all the rest were thin enough, Heaven knows;
And some of them had lost their recollection,
Happier than they who still perceived their woes;

But others ponder'd on a new dissection,
As if not warn'd sufficiently by those
Who had already perish'd, suffering madly,
For having used their appetites so sadly.

81

And next day they thought upon the master's mate,
As fattest; but he saved himself, because,
Besides being much averse from such a fate,
There were some other reasons: the first was,
He had been rather indisposed of late;
And that which chiefly proved his saving clause,
Was a small present made to him at Cadiz,
By general subscription of the ladies.

82

Of poor Pedrillo something still remain'd,
But was used sparingly,—some were afraid,
And others still their appetites constrain'd,
Or but at times a little supper made;
All except Juan, who throughout abstain'd,
Chewing a piece of bamboo, and some lead:
At length they caught two boobies, and a noddy.
And then they left off eating the dead body.

83

And if Pedrillo's fate should shocking be,
Remember Ugolino condescends
To eat the head of his arch-enemy
The moment after he politely ends
His tale: if foes be food in hell, at sea
'Tis surely fair to dine upon our friends,
When shipwreck's short allowance grows too scanty,
Without being much more horrible than Dante.

84

And the same night there fell a shower of rain,
For which their mouths gaped, like the cracks of earth
When dried to summer dust; till taught by pain,
Men really know not what good water's worth;

If you had been in Turkey or in Spain,
Or with a famish'd boat's-crew had your berth,
Or in the desert heard the camel's bell,
You'd wish yourself where Truth is—in a well.

85

It pour'd down torrents, but they were no richer,
Until they found a ragged piece of sheet,
Which served them as a sort of spongy pitcher,
And when they deem'd its moisture was complete,
They wrung it out, and though a thirsty ditcher
Might not have thought the scanty draught so sweet
As a full pot of porter, to their thinking
They ne'er till now had known the joys of drinking.

86

And their baked lips, with many a bloody crack,
Suck'd in the moisture, which like nectar stream'd;
Their throats were ovens, their swoln tongues were black
As the rich man's in hell, who vainly scream'd
To beg the beggar, who could not rain back
A drop of dew, when every drop had seem'd
To taste of heaven—If this be true, indeed,
Some Christians have a comfortable creed.

87

There were two fathers in this ghastly crew,
And with them their two sons, of whom the one
Was more robust and hardy to the view,
But he died early; and when he was gone,
His nearest messmate told his sire, who threw
One glance at him, and said, 'Heaven's will be done!
I can do nothing,' and he saw him thrown
Into the deep without a tear or groan.

88

The other father had a weaklier child,
Of a soft cheek, and aspect delicate;
But the boy bore up long, and with a mild
And patient spirit held aloof his fate;

Little he said, and now and then he smiled,
As if to win a part from off the weight
He saw increasing on his father's heart,
With the deep deadly thought, that they must part.

89

And o'er him bent his sire, and never raised
His eyes from off his face, but wiped the foam
From his pale lips, and ever on him gazed,
And when the wish'd-for shower at length was come,
And the boy's eyes, which the dull film half glazed,
Brighten'd, and for a moment seem'd to roam,
He squeezed from out a rag some drops of rain
Into his dying child's mouth—but in vain.

90

The boy expired—the father held the clay,
And look'd upon it long, and when at last
Death left no doubt, and the dead burthen lay
Stiff on his heart, and pulse and hope were past,
He watch'd it wistfully, until away
'Twas borne by the rude wave wherein 'twas cast;
Then he himself sunk down all dumb and shivering,
And gave no sign of life, save his limbs quivering.

91

Now overhead a rainbow, bursting through
The scattering clouds, shone, spanning the dark sea,
Resting its bright base on the quivering blue;
And all within its arch appear'd to be
Clearer than that without, and its wide hue
Wax'd broad and waving, like a banner free,
Then changed like to a bow that's bent, and then
Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwreck'd men.

92

It changed, of course; a heavenly chameleon,
The airy child of vapour and the sun,
Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermilion,
Baptized in molten gold, and swathed in dun,

Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion,
And blending every colour into one,
Just like a black eye in a recent scuffle
(For sometimes we must box without the muffle).

93

Our shipwreck'd seamen thought it a good omen—
It is as well to think so, now and then;
'Twas an old custom of the Greek and Roman,
And may become of great advantage when
Folks are discouraged; and most surely no men
Had greater need to nerve themselves again
Than these, and so this rainbow look'd like hope—
Quite a celestial kaleidoscope.

94

About this time a beautiful white bird,
Web-footed, not unlike a dove in size
And plumage (probably it might have err'd
Upon its course), pass'd oft before their eyes,
And tried to perch, although it saw and heard
The men within the boat, and in this guise
It came and went, and flutter'd round them till
Night fell:—this seem'd a better omen still.

95

But in this case I also must remark,
'Twas well this bird of promise did not perch,
Because the tackle of our shatter'd bark
Was not so safe for roosting as a church;
And had it been the dove from Noah's ark,
Returning there from her successful search,
Which in their way that moment chanced to fall,
They would have eat her, olive-branch and all.

96

With twilight it again came on to blow,
But not with violence; the stars shone out,
The boat made way; yet now they were so low,
They knew not where nor what they were about;

Some fancied they saw land, and some said 'No!'
The frequent fog-banks gave them cause to doubt—
Some swore that they heard breakers, others guns,
And all mistook about the latter once.

97

As morning broke, the light wind died away,
When he who had the watch sung out and swore,
If 'twas not land that rose with the sun's ray,
He wish'd that land he never might see more:¹
And the rest rubb'd their eyes, and saw a bay,
Or thought they saw, and shaped their course for shore;
For shore it was, and gradually grew
Distinct, and high, and palpable to view.

98

And then of these some part burst into tears,
And others, looking with a stupid stare,
Could not yet separate their hopes from fears,
And seem'd as if they had no further care;
While a few pray'd—(the first time for some years).
And at the bottom of the boat three were
Asleep: they shook them by the hand and head,
And tried to awaken them, but found them dead.

99

The day before, fast sleeping on the water,
They found a turtle of the hawk's-bill kind,
And by good fortune, gliding softly, caught her,
Which yielded a day's life, and to their mind
Proved even still a more nutritious matter,
Because it left encouragement behind:
They thought that in such perils, more than chance
Had sent them this for their deliverance.

100

The land appear'd a high and rocky coast,
And higher grew the mountains as they drew,
Set by a current, toward it: they were lost
In various conjectures, for none knew

To what part of the earth they had been tost,
So changeable had been the winds that blew;
Some thought it was Mount Ætna, some the highlands
Of Candia, Cyprus, Rhodes, or other islands.

101

Meantime the current, with a rising gale,
Still set them onwards to the welcome shore,
Like Charon's bark of spectres, dull and pale:
Their living freight was now reduced to four,
And three dead, whom their strength could not avail
To heave into the deep with those before,
Though the two sharks still follow'd them, and dash'd
The spray into their faces as they splash'd.

102

Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat, had done
Their work on them by turns, and thinn'd them to
Such things a mother had not known her son
Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew;
By night chill'd, by day scorch'd, thus one by one
They perish'd, until wither'd to these few,
But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
In washing down Pedrillo with salt water.

103

As they drew nigh the land, which now was seen
Unequal in its aspect here and there,
They felt the freshness of its growing green,
That waved in forest-tops, and smooth'd the air,
And fell upon their glazed eyes like a screen
From glistening waves, and skies so hot and bare—
Lovely seem'd any object that should sweep
Away the vast, salt, dread, eternal deep.

104

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they
Were mad for land, and thus their course they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring breakers lay:

A reef between them also now began
To show its boiling surf and bounding spray,
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore,—and overset her.

105

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,
Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
Had often turn'd the art to some account:
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
He could, perhaps, have pass'd the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.

106

So here, though faint, emaciated, and stark,
He buoy'd his boyish limbs, and strove to ply
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was dark,
The beach which lay before him, high and dry:
The greatest danger here was from a shark,
That carried off his neighbour by the thigh;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arrived on shore but him.

107

Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was wash'd
Just as his feeble arms could strike no more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelm'd him as 'twas dash'd
Within his grasp; he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was lash'd;
At last, with swimming, wading, scrambling, he
Roll'd on the beach, half senseless, from the sea:

108

There, breathless, with his digging nails he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate grave:

And there he lay, full length, where he was flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was saved, perhaps in vain.

109

With slow and staggering effort he arose,
But sunk again upon his bleeding knee
And quivering hand; and then he look'd for those
Who long had been his mates upon the sea;
But none of them appear'd to share his woes,
Save one, a corpse, from out the famish'd three,
Who died two days before, and now had found
An unknown barren beach for burial-ground.

110

And as he gazed, his dizzy brain spun fast,
And down he sunk; and as he sunk, the sand
Swam round and round, and all his senses pass'd:
He fell upon his side, and his stretch'd hand
Droop'd dripping on the oar (their jury-mast),
And, like a wither'd lily, on the land
His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
As fair a thing as e'er was form'd of clay.

111

How long in his damp trance young Juan lay
He knew not, for the earth was gone for him,
And time had nothing more of night nor day
For his congealing blood, and senses dim;
And how this heavy faintness pass'd away
He knew not, till each painful pulse and limb,
And tingling vein, seem'd throbbing back to life,
For Death, though vanquish'd, still retired with strife.

112

His eyes he open'd, shut, again unclosed,
For all was doubt and dizziness; he thought
He still was in the boat, and had but dozed,
And felt again with his despair o'crwrought,

And wish'd it death in which he had reposed,
And then once more his feelings back were brought,
And slowly by his swimming eyes was scen
A lovely female face of seventeen.

113

'Twas bending close o'er his, and the small mouth
Seem'd almost prying into his for breath;
And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recall'd his answering spirits back from death;
And, bathing his chill temples, tried to soothe
Each pulse to animation, till beneath
Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
To these kind efforts made a low reply.

114

Then was the cordial pour'd, and mantle flung
Around his scarce-clad limbs; and the fair arm
Raised higher the faint head which o'er it hung;
And her transparent check, all pure and warm,
Pillow'd his death-like forehead; then she wrung
His dewy curls, long drench'd by every storm;
And watch'd with eagerness each throb that drew
A sigh from his heaved bosom—and hers, too.

115

And lifting him with care into the cave,
The gentle girl, and her attendant,—one
Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,
And more robust of figure—then begun
To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
Light to the rocks that roof'd them, which the sun
Had never seen, the maid, or whatsoe'er
She was, appear'd distinct, and tall, and fair.

116

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair,
Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were roll'd
In braids behind; and though her stature were

Even of the highest for a female mould,
They nearly reach'd her heel; and in her air
There was a something which bespoke command,
As one who was a lady in the land.

117

Her hair, I said, was auburn; but her eyes
Were black as death, their lashes the same hue,
Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
Deepest attraction; for when to the view
Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
'Tis as the snake late coil'd, who pours his length,
And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

118

Her brow was white and low, her cheek's pure dye
Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
Short upper lip—sweet lips! that make us sigh
Ever to have seen such; for she was one
Fit for the model of a statuary
(A race of mere impostors, when all's done—
I've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

119

I'll tell you why I say so, for 'tis just
One should not rail without a decent cause:
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model; and if e'er she must
Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compass'd, nor less mortal chisel wrought.

120

And such was she, the lady of the cave:
Her dress was very different from the Spanish,
Simpler, and yet of colours not so grave;
For, as you know, the Spanish women banish

Bright hues when out of doors, and yet, while wave
Around them (what I hope will never vanish)
The basquina and the mantilla, they
Seem at the same time mystical and gay.

121

But with our damsel this was not the case:
Her dress was many-colour'd, finely spun;
Her locks curl'd negligently round her face,
But through them gold and gems profusely shone:
Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace
Flow'd in her veil, and many a precious stone
Flash'd on her little hand; but, what was shocking,
Her small snow feet had slippers, but no stocking.

122

The other female's dress was not unlike,
But of inferior materials: she
Had not so many ornaments to strike,
Her hair had silver only, bound to be
Her dowry; and her veil, in form alike,
Was coarser; and her air, though firm, less free;
Her hair was thicker, but less long; her eyes
As black, but quicker, and of smaller size.

123

And these two tended him, and cheer'd him both
With food and raiment, and those soft attentions,
Which are—(as I must own)—of female growth,
And have ten thousand delicate inventions:
They made a most superior mess of broth,
A thing which poesy but seldom mentions,
But the best dish that e'er was cook'd since Homer's
Achilles order'd dinner for new comers.

124

I'll tell you who they were, this female pair,
Lest they should seem princesses in disguise;
Besides, I hate all mystery, and that air
Of clap-trap, which your recent poets prize;

And so, in short, the girls they really were
They shall appear before your curious eyes,
Mistress and maid; the first was only daughter
Of an old man, who lived upon the water.

125

A fisherman he had been in his youth,
And still a sort of fisherman was he;
But other speculations were, in sooth,
Added to his connexion with the sea,
Perhaps not so respectable, in truth:
A little smuggling, and some piracy,
Left him, at last, the sole of many masters
Of an ill-gotten million of piastres.

126

A fisher, therefore, was he,—though of men,
Like Peter the Apostle,—and he fish'd
For wandering merchant vessels, now and then,
And sometimes caught as many as he wish'd;
The cargoes he confiscated, and gain
He sought in the slave-market too, and dish'd
Full many a morsel for that Turkish trade,
By which, no doubt, a good deal may be made.

127

He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
(One of the wild and smaller Cyclades)
A very handsome house from out his guilt,
And there he lived exceedingly at ease;
Heaven knows what cash he got, or blood he spilt,
A sad old fellow was he, if you please;
But this I know, it was a spacious building,
Full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding.

128

He had an only daughter, call'd Haidée,
The greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles;
Besides, so very beautiful was she,
Her dowry was as nothing to her smiles:

Still in her teens, and like a lovely tree
She grew to womanhood, and between whiles
Rejected several suitors, just to learn
How to accept a better in his turn.

129

And walking out upon the beach, below
The cliff,—towards sunset, on that day she found,
Insensible,—not dead, but nearly so,—
Don Juan, almost famish'd, and half drown'd;
But being naked, she was shock'd, you know,
Yet deem'd herself in common pity bound,
As far as in her lay, 'to take him in,
A stranger' dying, with so white a skin.

130

But taking him into her father's house
Was not exactly the best way to save,
But like conveying to the cat the mouse,
Or people in a trance into their grave;
Because the good old man had so much 'pangs,'
Unlike the honest Arab thieves so brave,
He would have hospitably cured the stranger
And sold him instantly when out of danger.

131

And therefore, with her maid, she thought it best
(A virgin always on her maid relies)
To place him in the cave for present rest:
And when, at last, he open'd his black eyes,
Their charity increased about their guest;
And their compassion grew to such a size,
It open'd half the turnpike gates to heaven—
(St. Paul says, 'tis the toll which must be given).

132

They made a fire,—but such a fire as they
Upon the moment could contrive with such
Materials as were cast up round the bay,—
Some broken planks, and oars, that to the touch

Were nearly tinder, since so long they lay,
A mast was almost crumbled to a crutch;
But, by God's grace, here wrecks were in such plenty,
That there was fuel to have furnish'd twenty.

133

He had a bed of furs, and a pelisse,
For Haidée stripp'd her sables off to make
His couch; and, that he might be more at ease,
And warm, in case by chance he should awake,
They also gave a petticoat apiece,
She and her maid,—and promised by daybreak
To pay him a fresh visit, with a dish
For breakfast, of eggs, coffee, bread, and fish.

134

And thus they left him to his lone repose:
Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,
Who sleep at last, perhaps (God only knows),
Just for the present; and in his lull'd head
Not even a vision of his former woes
Throbb'd in accursed dreams, which sometimes spread
Unwelcome visions of our former years,
Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears.

135

Young Juan slept all dreamless;—but the maid,
Who smooth'd his pillow, as she left the den
Look'd back upon him, and a moment stayed,
And turn'd, believing that he call'd again.
He slumber'd; yet she thought, at least she said
(The heart will slip, even as the tongue and pen),
He had pronounced her name—but she forgot
That at this moment Juan knew it not.

136

And pensive to her father's house she went,
Enjoining silence strict to Zoe, who
Better than her knew what, in fact, she meant,
She being wiser by a year or two:

A year or two's an age when rightly spent,
And Zoe spent hers, as most women do,
In gaining all that useful sort of knowledge
Which is acquired in Nature's good old college.

137

The morn broke, and found Juan slumbering still
Fast in his cave, and nothing clash'd upon
His rest: the rushing of the neighbouring rill,
And the young beams of the excluded sun,
Troubled him not, and he might sleep his fill;
And need he had of slumber yet, for none
Had suffer'd more—his hardships were comparative
To those related in my grand-dad's 'Narrative.'

138

Not so Haidée: she sadly toss'd and tumbled,
And started from her sleep, and, turning o'er,
Dream'd of a thousand wrecks, o'er which she stumbled,
And handsome corpses strew'd upon the shore;
And woke her maid so early that she grumbled,
And call'd her father's old slaves up, who swore
In several oaths—Armenian, Turk, and Greek—
They knew not what to think of such a freak.

139

But up she got, and up she made them get,
With some pretence about the sun, that makes
Sweet skies just when he rises, or is set;
And 'tis, no doubt, a sight to see when breaks
Bright Phoebus, while the mountains still are wet
With mist, and every bird with him awakes,
And night is flung off like a mourning suit
Worn for a husband,—or some other brute.

140

I say, the sun is a most glorious sight:
I've seen him rise full oft, indeed of late
I have sat up on purpose all the night,
Which hastens, as physicians say, one's fate;

And so all ye, who would be in the right
In health and purse, begin your day to date
From daybreak, and when coffin'd at fourscore
Engrave upon the plate, you rose at four.

141

And Haidée met the morning face to face;
Her own was freshest, though a feverish flush
Had dyed it with the headlong blood, whose race
From heart to cheek is curb'd into a blush,
Like to a torrent which a mountain's base,
That overpowers some Alpine river's rush,
Checks to a lake, whose waves in circles spread;
Or the Red Sea—but the sea is not red.

142

And down the cliff the island virgin came,
And near the cave her quick light footsteps drew,
While the sun smiled on her with his first flame,
And young Aurora kiss'd her lips with dew,
Taking her for a sister; just the same
Mistake you would have made on seeing the two,
Although the mortal, quite as fresh and fair,
Had all the advantage, too, of not being air.

143

And when into the cavern Haidée stepp'd
All timidly, yet rapidly, she saw
That like an infant Juan sweetly slept;
And then she stopp'd, and stood as if in awe
(For sleep is awful), and on tiptoe crept
And wrapt him closer, lest the air, too raw,
Should reach his blood, then o'er him still as death
Bent, with hush'd lips, that drank his scarce-drawn breath.

144

And thus like to an angel o'er the dying
Who die in righteousness, she lean'd; and there
All tranquilly the shipwreck'd boy was lying,
As o'er him lay the calm and stirless air:

But Zoe the meantime some eggs was frying,
Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair
Must breakfast, and betimes—lest they should ask it,
She drew out her provision from the basket.

145

She knew that the best feelings must have victual,
And that a shipwreck'd youth would hungry be;
Besides, being less in love, she yawn'd a little,
And felt her veins chill'd by the neighbouring sea;
And so, she cook'd their breakfast to a tittle;
I can't say that she gave them any tea,
But there were eggs, fruit, coffee, bread, fish, honey,
With Scio wine,—and all for love, not money.

146

And Zoe, when the eggs were ready, and
The coffee made, would fain have waken'd Juan;
But Haidée stopp'd her with her quick small hand,
And without word, a sign her finger drew on
Her lip, which Zoe needs must understand;
And, the first breakfast spoilt, prepared a new one,
Because her mistress would not let her break
That sleep which seem'd as it would ne'er awake.

147

For still he lay, and on his thin worn cheek
A purple hectic play'd like dying day
On the snow-tops of distant hills; the streak
Of sufferance yet upon his forehead lay,
Where the blue veins look'd shadowy, shrunk, and weak;
And his black curls were dewy with the spray,
Which weigh'd upon them yet, all damp and salt,
Mix'd with the stony vapours of the vault.

148

And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
Hush'd as the babe upon its mother's breast,
Droop'd as the willow when no winds can breathe
Lull'd like the depth of ocean when at rest,

Fair as the crowning rose of the whole wreath,
Soft as the callow cygnet in its nest;
In short, he was a very pretty fellow,
Although his woes had turn'd him rather yellow.

149

He woke and gazed, and would have slept again,
But the fair face which met his eyes forbade
Those eyes to close, though weariness and pain
Had further sleep a further pleasure made;
For woman's face was never form'd in vain
For Juan, so that even when he pray'd
He turn'd from grisly saints, and martyrs hairy,
To the sweet portraits of the Virgin Mary.

150

And thus upon his elbow he arose,
And look'd upon the lady, in whose cheek
The pale contended with the purple rose,
As with an effort she began to speak;
Her eyes were eloquent, her words would pose,
Although she told him, in good modern Greek.
With an Ionian accent, low and sweet,
That he was faint, and must not talk, but eat.

151

Now Juan could not understand a word,
Being no Grecian; but he had an ear,
And her voice was the warble of a bird,
So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard;
The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
Without knowing why—an overpowering tone,
Whence melody descends as from a throne.

152

And Juan gazed as one who is awake
By a distant organ, doubting if he be
Not yet a dreamer, till the spell is broke
By the watchman, or some such reality,

Or by one's early valet's cursed knock;
At least it is a heavy sound to me,
Who like a morning slumber—for the night
Shows stars and women in a better light.

153

And Juan, too, was help'd out from his dream,
Or sleep, or whatsoe'er it was, by feeling
A most prodigious appetite; the steam
Of Zoe's cookery no doubt was stealing
Upon his senses, and the kindling beam
Of the new fire, which Zoe kept up, kneeling,
To stir her viands, made him quite awake
And long for food, but chiefly a beef-steak.

154

But beef is rare within these oxless isles;
Goat's flesh there is, no doubt, and kid, and mutton,
And, when a holiday upon them smiles,
A joint upon their barbarous spits they put on:
But this occurs but seldom, between whiles,
For some of these are rocks with scarce a hut on;
Others are fair and fertile, among which
This, though not large, was one of the most rich.

155

I say that beef is rare, and can't help thinking
That the old fable of the Minotaur—
From which our modern morals, rightly shrinking,
Condemn the royal lady's taste who wore
A cow's shape for a mask—was only (sinking
The allegory) a mere type, no more,
That Pasiphae promoted breeding cattle,
To make the Cretans bloodier in battle.

156

For we all know that English people are
Fed upon beef—I won't say much of beer,
Because 'tis liquor only, and being far
From this my subject, has no business here;

We know, too, they are very fond of war,
A pleasure—like all pleasures—rather dear;
So were the Cretans—from which I infer
That beef and battles both were owing to her.

157

But to resume. The languid Juan raised
His head upon his elbow, and he saw
A sight on which he had not lately gazed,
As all his latter meals had been quite raw,
Three or four things, for which the Lord be praised,
And, feeling still the famish'd vulture gnaw,
He fell upon whate'er was offer'd, like
A priest, a shark, an alderman, or pike.

158

He ate, and he was well supplied; and she,
Who watch'd him like a mother, would have fed
Him past all bounds, because she smiled to see
Such appetite in one she had deem'd dead:
But Zoe, being older than Haidée,
Knew (by tradition, for she ne'er had read)
That famish'd people must be slowly nurst,
And fed by spoonfuls, else they always burst.

159

And so she took the liberty to state,
Rather by deeds than words, because the case
Was urgent, that the gentleman, whose fate
Had made her mistress quit her bed to trace
The sea-shore at this hour, must leave his plate,
Unless he wish'd to die upon the place—
She snatch'd it, and refused another morsel,
Saying, he had gorged enough to make a horse ill.

160

Next they—he being naked, save a tatter'd
Pair of scarce decent trowsers—went to work,
And in the fire his recent rags they scatter'd,
And dress'd him, for the present, like a Turk,

Or Greek—that is, although it not much matter'd,
Omitting turban, slippers, pistols, dirk,—
They furnish'd him, entire, except some stitches,
With a clean shirt, and very spacious breeches.

161

And then fair Haidée tried her tongue at speaking,
But not a word could Juan comprehend,
Although he listen'd so that the young Greek in
Her earnestness would ne'er have made an end;
And, as he interrupted not, went eking
Her speech out to her protégé and friend,
Till pausing at the last her breath to take,
She saw he did not understand Romàic.

162

And then she had recourse to nods, and signs,
And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking eye,
And read (the only book she could) the lines
Of his fair face, and found, by sympathy,
The answer eloquent, where the soul shines
And darts in one quick glance a long reply;
And thus in every look she saw exprest
A world of words, and things at which she guess'd.

163

And now, by dint of fingers and of eyes,
And words repeated after her, he took
A lesson in her tongue; but by surmise,
No doubt, less of her language than her look:
As he who studies fervently the skies
Turns oftener to the stars than to his book,
Thus Juan learn'd his alpha beta better
From Haidée's glance than any graven letter.

164

'Tis pleasing to be school'd in a strange tongue
By female lips and eyes—that is, I mean,
When both the teacher and the taught are young,
As was the case, at least, where I have been;

They smile so when one's right, and when one's wrong
They smile still more, and then there intervene
Pressure of hands, perhaps even a chaste kiss;—
I learn'd the little that I know by this:

165

That is, some words of Spanish, Turk, and Greek,
Italian not at all, having no teachers;
Much English I cannot pretend to speak,
Learning that language chiefly from its preachers,
Barrow, South, Tillotson, whom every week
I study, also Blair, the highest teachers
Of eloquence in piety and prose—
I hate your poets, so read none of those.

166

As for the ladies, I have nought to say,
A wanderer from the British world of fashion,
Where I, like other 'dogs, have had my day,'
Like other men, too, may have had my passion—
But that, like other things, has pass'd away,
And all her fools whom I *could* lay the lash on:
Foes, friends, men, women, now are nought to me
But dreams of what has been, no more to be.

167

Return we to Don Juan. He begun
To hear new words, and to repeat them; but
Some feelings, universal as the sun,
Were such as could not in his breast be shut
More than within the bosom of a nun:
He was in love,—as you would be, no doubt,
With a young benefactress,—so was she,
Just in the way we very often see.

168

And every day by daybreak—rather early
For Juan, who was somewhat fond of rest—
She came into the cave, but it was merely
To see her bird reposing in his nest;

And she would softly stir his locks so curly,
Without disturbing her yet slumbering guest,
Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,
As o'er a bed of roses the sweet south.

169

And every morn his colour freshlier came,
And every day help'd on his convalescence;
'Twas well, because health in the human frame
Is pleasant, besides being true love's essence,
For health and idleness to passion's flame
Are oil and gunpowder; and some good lessons
Are also learnt from Ceres and from Bacchus,
Without whom Venus will not long attack us.

170

While Venus fills the heart (without heart really
Love, though good always, is not quite so good),
Ceres presents a plate of vermicelli,—
For love must be sustain'd like flesh and blood,
While Bacchus pours out wine, or hands a jelly:
Eggs, oysters, too, are amatory food;
But who is their purveyor from above
Heaven knows,—it may be Neptune, Pan, or Jove.

171

When Juan woke he found some good things ready,
A bath, a breakfast, and the finest eyes
That ever made a youthful heart less steady,
Besides her maid's, as pretty for their size;
But I have spoken of all this already—
And repetition's tiresome and unwise,—
Well—Juan, after bathing in the sea,
Came always back to coffee and Haidéc.

172

Both were so young, and one so innocent,
That bathing pass'd for nothing: Juan seem'd
To her, as 'twere, the kind of being sent,
Of whom these two years she had nightly dream'd,

A something to be loved, a creature meant
To be her happiness, and whom she deem'd
To render happy: all who joy would win
Must share it,—Happiness was born a twin.

173

It was such pleasure to behold him, such
Enlargement of existence to partake
Nature with him, to thrill beneath his touch,
To watch him slumbering, and to see him wake;
To live with him for ever were too much;
But then the thought of parting made her quake:
He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
Like a rich wreck—her first love, and her last.

174

And thus a moon roll'd on, and fair Haidée
Paid daily visits to her boy, and took
Such plentiful precautions, that still he
Remain'd unknown within his craggy nook;
At last her father's prows put out to sea,
For certain merchantmen upon the look,
Not as of yore to carry off an Io,
But three Ragusan vessels bound for Scio.

175

Then came her freedom, for she had no mother.
So that, her father being at sea, she was
Free as a married woman, or such other
Female, as where she likes may freely pass,
Without even the encumbrance of a brother,
The freest she that ever gazed on glass:
I speak of Christian lands in this comparison,
Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in garrison.

176

Now she prolong'd her visits and her talk
(For they must talk), and he had learnt to say
So much as to propose to take a walk,—
For little had he wander'd since the day

On which, like a young flower snapp'd from the
stalk,

Drooping and dewy on the beach he lay,—
And thus they walk'd out in the afternoon,
And saw the sun set opposite the moon.

177

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.

178

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's rain!
Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please,—the more because they preach in
vain,—
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after.

179

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk,
The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion!
But to return,—Get very drunk; and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then.

180

Ring for your valet—bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you'll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water.

181

The coast—I think it was the coast that I
Was just describing—Yes, it *was* the coast—
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves untost,
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and little billow crost
By some low rock or shelve, that make it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

182

And forth they wander'd, her sire being gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
Save Zoe, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
Thought daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses.

183

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill,
Upon the other, and the rosy sky,
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.

184

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden'd sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it were plann'd,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

185

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the waves splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other—and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss;

186

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's strength,
I think it must be reckon'd by its length.

187

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they never reckon'd;
And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckon'd,
Which, being join'd, like swarming bees they clung—
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

188

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momentarily grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

189

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone beach,
They felt no terrors from the night; they were
All in all to each other; though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle—first love,—that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

190

Haidée spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,
Or perils by a loving maid incurr'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird,
And never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy.

191

She loved, and was beloved—she adored,
And she was worshipp'd; after nature's fashion,
Their intense souls, into each other pour'd,
If souls could die, had perish'd in that passion,—
But by degrees their senses were restored,
Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on;
And, beating 'gainst *his* bosom, Haidée's heart
Felt as if never more to beat apart.

192

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds eternity cannot annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire—all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.

193

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were
So loving and so lovely—till then never,
Excepting our first parents, such a pair
Had run the risk of being damn'd for ever;
And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian river,
And hell and purgatory—but forgot
Just in the very crisis she should not.

194

They look upon each other, and their eyes
Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps
Round Juan's head, and his around her lies
Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;
She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,
He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
And thus they form a group that's quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

195

And when those deep and burning moments pass'd,
And Juan sunk to sleep within her arms,
She slept not, but all tenderly, though fast,
Sustain'd his head upon her bosom's charms;
And now and then her eye to heaven is cast,
And then on the pale cheek her breast now warms,
Pillow'd on her o'erflowing heart, which pants
With all it granted, and with all it grants.

196

An infant when it gazes on a light,
A child the moment when it drains the breast,
A devotee when soars the Host in sight,
An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
A sailor when the prize has struck in fight,
A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
Feel rapture; but not such true joy are reaping
As they who watch o'er what they love while sleeping.

197

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
All that it hath of life with us is living;
So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
And all unconscious of the joy 'tis giving;
All it hath felt, inflicted, pass'd, and proved,
Hush'd into depths beyond the watcher's diving;
There lies the thing we love with all its errors
And all its charms, like death without its terrors.

198

The lady watch'd her lover—and that hour
Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's solitude,
O'erflow'd her soul with their united power;
Amidst the barren sand and rocks so rude
She and her wave-worn love had made their bower,
Where nought upon their passion could intrude,
And all the stars that crowded the blue space
Saw nothing happier than her glowing face.

199

Alas! the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

200

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to women; one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests beyond?
A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's over.

201

Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,
Some mind their household, others dissipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

202

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not this:
Haidée was Passion's child, born where the sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
Of lus gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen: what was said or done
Elsewhere was nothing. She had nought to fear,
Hope, care, nor love beyond,—her heart beat *here*.

203

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that beat!
How much it costs us! yet each rising throb
Is in its cause as its effect so sweet,
That Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob
Joy of its alchemy, and to repeat
Fine truths; even Conscience, too, has a tough job
To make us understand each good old maxim,
So good—I wonder Castlereagh don't tax 'em.

204

And now 'twas done—on the lone shore were plighted
Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial torches, shed
Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:
Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed,
By their own feelings hallow'd and united,
Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed:
And they were happy, for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

205

Oh, Love! of whom great Cæsar was the suitor,
Titus the master, Antony the slave,
Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor,
Sappho the sage blue-stocking, in whose grave
All those may leap who rather would be neuter—
(Leucadia's rock still overlooks the wave)—
Oh, Love! thou art the very god of evil,
For, after all, we cannot call thee devil.

206

Thou mak'st the chaste connubial state precarious,
And jestest with the brows of mightiest men:
Cæsar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,
Have much employ'd the muse of history's pen:
Their lives and fortunes were extremely various,
Such worthies Time will never see again;
Yet to these four in three things the same luck holds,
They all were heroes, conquerors, and cuckolds.

207

Thou mak'st philosophers; there's Epicurus
And Aristippus, a material crew!
Who to immoral courses would allure us
By theories quite practicable too;
If only from the devil they would insure us,
How pleasant were the maxim (not quite new),
'Eat, drink, and love; what can the rest avail us?'
So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.

208

But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia?
And should he have forgotten her so soon?
I can't but say it seems to me most truly a
Perplexing question; but, no doubt, the moon
Does these things for us, and whenever newly a
Strong palpitation rises, 'tis her boon,
Else how the devil is it that fresh features
Have such a charm for us poor human creatures?

209

I hate inconstancy—I loathe, detest,
Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
No permanent foundations can be laid;
Love, constant love, has been my constant guest,
And yet last night, being at a masquerade,
I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from Milan,
Which gave me some sensations like a villain.

210

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,
And whisper'd, 'Think of every sacred tie!'
'I will, my dear Philosophy!' I said,
'But then her teeth, and then, oh, Heaven! her eye!
I'll just inquire if she be wife or maid,
Or neither—out of curiosity.'
'Stop!' cried Philosophy, with air so Grecian
(Though she was masqued then as a fair Venetian);

211

Stop!' so I stopp'd.—But to return: that which
Men call inconstancy is nothing more
Than admiration due where nature's rich
Profusion with young beauty covers o'er
Some favour'd object; and as in the niche
A lovely statue we almost adore,
This sort of adoration of the real
Is but a heightening of the *beau idéal*.

212

'Tis the perception of the beautiful,
A fine extension of the faculties,
Platonic, universal, wonderful,
Drawn from the stars, and filter'd through the skies,
Without which life would be extremely dull;
In short, it is the use of our own eyes,
With one or two small senses added, just
To hint that flesh is form'd of fiery dust.

213

Yet 'tis a painful feeling, and unwilling,
For surely if we always could perceive
In the same object graces quite as killing
As when she rose upon us like an Eve,
'Twould save us many a heart-ache, many a shilling
(For we must get them any how, or grieve),
Whereas, if one sole lady pleased for ever,
How pleasant for the heart, as well as liver!

214

The heart is like the sky, a part of heaven,
But changes night and day, too, like the sky;
Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be driven,
And darkness and destruction as on high:
But when it hath been scorch'd, and pierced, and riven,
Its storms expire in water-drops; the eye
Pours forth at last the heart's blood turn'd to tears,
Which make the English climate of our years.

215

The liver is the lazaret of bile,
But very rarely executes its function,
For the first passion stays there such a while,
That all the rest creep in and form a junction,
Like knots of vipers on a dunghill's soil,
Rage, fear, hate, jealousy, revenge, compunction,
So that all mischiefs spring up from this entrail,
Like earthquakes from the hidden fire call'd 'central.'

216

In the mean time, without proceeding more
In this anatomy, I've finish'd now
Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
That being about the number I'll allow
Each canto of the twelve, or twenty-four;
And, laying down my pen, I make my bow,
Leaving Don Juan and Haidée to plead
For them and theirs with all who deign to read.

CANTO THE THIRD

I

Hail, Muse! *et cætera*.—We left Juan sleeping,
Pillow'd upon a fair and happy breast,
And watch'd by eyes that never yet knew weeping,
And loved by a young heart, too deeply blest
To feel the poison through her spirit creeping,
Or know who rested there, a foe to rest,
Had soil'd the current of her sinless years,
And turn'd her pure heart's purest blood to tears!

2

Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who dote on odours pluck the flowers,
And place them on their breast—but place to die—
Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

3

In her first passion woman loves her lover,
In all the others all she loves is love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over
And fits her loosely—like an easy glove,
As you may find, whene'er you like to prove her:
One man alone at first her heart can move;
She then prefers him in the plural number,
Not finding that the additions much encumber.

4

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;
But one thing's pretty sure; a woman planted
(Unless at once she plunge for life in prayers)—
After a decent time must be gallanted;

Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted;
Yet there are some, they say, who have had *none*,
But those who have ne'er end with only *one*.

5

'Tis melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also crime,
That love and marriage rarely can combine,
Although they both are born in the same clime;
Marriage from love, like vinegar from wine—
A sad, sour, sober beverage—by time
Is sharpen'd from its high celestial flavour,
Down to a very homely household savour.

6

There's something of antipathy, as 'twere,
Between their present and their future state;
A kind of flattery that's hardly fair
Is used until the truth arrives too late—
Yet what can people do, except despair?
The same things change their names at such a rate;
For instance—passion in a lover's glorious,
But in a husband is pronounced uxorious

7

Men grow ashamed of being so very fond;
They sometimes also get a little tired
(But that, of course, is rare), and then despond:
The same things cannot always be admired,
Yet 'tis 'so nominated in the bond,'
That both are tied till one shall have expired.
Sad thought! to lose the spouse that was adorning
Our days, and put one's servants into mourning.

8

There's doubtless something in domestic doings
Which forms, in fact, true love's antithesis;
Romances paint at full length people's wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages;

For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss:
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

9

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage;
The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might disparage
The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

10

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connexion
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to mar);
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you conceive.

11

Some persons say that Dante meant theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress—I,
Although my opinion may require apology,
Decm this a commentator's phantasy,
Unless indeed it was from his own knowledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstasies
Meant to personify the mathematics.

12

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine: it is not fair,
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they were;

Then if you'd have them wedded, please to shut
The book which treats of this erroneous pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful;
'Tis dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

13

Yet they were happy,—happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every visit,
Haidée forgot the island was her sire's:
When we have what we like, 'tis hard to miss it,
At least in the beginning, ere one tires;
Thus she came often, not a moment losing,
Whilst her piratical papa was cruising.

14

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,
Although he fleeced the flags of every nation,
For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 'tis nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and in an honester vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

15

The good old gentleman had been detain'd
By winds and waves, and some important captures;
And, in the hope of more, at sea remain'd,
Although a squall or two had damp'd his raptures,
By swamping one of the prizes; he had chain'd
His prisoners, dividing them like chapters
In number'd lots; they all had cuffs and collars,
And averaged each from ten to a hundred dollars.

16

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,
Among his friends the Mainots; some he sold
To his Tunis correspondents, save one man
Toss'd overboard unsaleable (being old):

The rest—save here and there some richer one,
Reserved for future ransom—in the hold,
Were link'd alike, as for the common people he
Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

17

The merchandise was served in the same way,
Pieced out for different marts in the Levant,
Except some certain portions of the prey,
Light classic articles of female want,
French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks, teapot, tray,
Guitars and castanets from Alicant,
All which selected from the spoil he gathers,
Robb'd for his daughter by the best of fathers.

18

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw—
A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton's,
Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a pittance.
These to secure in this strong blowing weather,
He caged in one huge hamper all together.

19

Then having settled his marine affairs,
Despatching single cruisers here and there,
His vessel having need of some repairs,
He shaped his course to where his daughter fair
Continued still her hospitable cares;
But that part of the coast being shoal and bare,
And rough with reefs which ran out many a mile,
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

20

And there he went ashore without delay,
Having no custom-house nor quarantine
To ask him awkward questions on the way,
About the time and place where he had been:

He left his ship to be hove down next day,
With orders to the people to careen;
So that all hands were busy beyond measure,
In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure.

21

Arriving at the summit of a hill
Which overlook'd the white walls of his home,
He stopp'd.—What singular emotions fill
Their bosoms who have been induced to roam!
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill—
With love for many, and with fears for some;
All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,
And bring our hearts back to their starting-post.

22

The approach of home to husbands and to sires,
After long travelling by land or water,
Most naturally some small doubt inspires—
A female family's a serious matter;
(None trusts the sex more, or so much admires—
But they hate flattery, so I never flatter;)
Wives in their husbands' absences grow subtler,
And daughters sometimes run off with the butler.

23

An honest gentleman at his return
May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;
Not all lone matrons for their husbands mourn,
Or show the same dislike to suitors' kisses;
The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
To his memory—and two or three young misses
Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches;—
And that *his* Argus bites him by—the breeches.

24

If single, probably his plighted fair
Has in his absence wedded some rich miser;
But all the better, for the happy pair
May quarrel, and the lady growing wiser,

He may resume his amatory care
As cavalier servente, or despise her;
And that his sorrow may not be a dumb one,
Write odes on the Inconstancy of Woman.

25

And oh! ye gentlemen who have already
Some chaste *liaison* of the kind—I mean
An honest friendship with a married lady—
The only thing of this sort ever seen
To last—of all connexions the most steady,
And the true Hymen, (the first's but a screen)—
Yet for all that keep not too long away;
I've known the absent wrong'd four times a day.

26

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
Much less experience of dry land than ocean,
On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad;
But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion
Of the true reason of his not being sad,
Or that of any other strong emotion;
He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher.

27

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
His garden trees all shadowy and green;
He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,
The distant dog-bark; and perceived between
The umbrage of the wood so cool and dun,
The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen
Of arms (in the East all arm) —and various dyes
Of colour'd garbs, as bright as butterflies.

28

And as the spot where they appear he nears,
Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling,
He hears—alas! no music of the spheres,
But an unhallow'd, earthly sound of fiddling!

A melody which made him doubt his ears,
The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter.

29

And still more nearly to the place advancing,
Descending rather quickly the declivity,
Through the waved branches, o'er the greensward
glancing,
'Midst other indications of festivity,
Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he
Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,
To which the Levantines are very partial.

30

And further on a group of Grecian girls,
The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
Lunk'd hand in hand, and dancing: each too having
Down her white neck long floating auburn curls—
(The least of which would set ten poets raving);
Their leader sang—and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

31

And here, assembled cross-legg'd round their trays,
Small social parties just begun to dine;
Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;
Above them their dessert grew on its vine,
The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er
Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd, their mellow store.

32

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
There wreath his venerable horns with flowers;
While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,
The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers

His sober head, majestically tame,
Or eats from out the palm, or playful lowers
His brow, as if in act to butt, and then
Yielding to their small hands, draws back again.

33

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks,
The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
Made quite a picture of these little Greeks;
So that the philosophical beholder
Sigh'd for their sakes—that they should e'er grow older.

34

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
To a sedate grey circle of old smokers,
Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
Of charms to make good gold and cure bad ails,
Or rocks bewitch'd that open to the knockers,
Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
Transform'd their lords to beasts (but that's a fact).

35

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,
All pretty pastimes in which no offence is;
But Lambro saw all these things with aversion,
Perceiving in his absence such expenses,
Dreading that climax of all human ills
The inflammation of his weekly bills.

36

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
The happiest mortals even after dinner! . . .
A day of gold from out an age of iron . . .
Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner; . . .

Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least) 's a siren,
That lures, to flay alive, the young beginner;
Lambro's reception at his people's banquet
Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

37

He—being a man who seldom used a word
Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise
(In general he surprised men with the sword)
His daughter—had not sent before to advise
Of his arrival, so that no one stirr'd;
And long he paused to reassure his eyes,
In fact much more astonish'd than delighted,
To find so much good company invited.

38

He did not know (alas! how men will lie!)
That a report (especially the Greeks)
Avouch'd his death (such people never die),
And put his house in mourning several weeks,—
But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom, too, had return'd to Haidée's cheeks.
Her tears, too, being return'd into their fount,
She now kept house upon her own account.

39

Hence all this rice, meat, dancing, wine, and fiddling,
Which turn'd the isle into a place of pleasure;
The servants all were getting drunk or idling,
A life which made them happy beyond measure.
Her father's hospitality seem'd muddling,
Compared with what Haidée did with his treasure;
'Twas wonderful how things went on improving,
While she had not one hour to spare from loving.

40

Perhaps you think, in stumbling on this feast,
He flew into a passion, and in fact
There was no mighty reason to be pleased;
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,

The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least,
To teach his people to be more exact,
And that, proceeding at a very high rate,
He show'd the royal *penchants* of a pirate.

41

You're wrong.—He was the mildest manner'd man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat,
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could divine his real thought;
No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.

42

Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
Tapping the shoulder of the nighest guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
Boded no good, whatever it express'd,
He asked the meaning of this holiday;
The vinous Greek to whom he had address'd
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, fill'd up a glass of wine,

43

And without turning his facetious head,
Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
'Talking's dry work, I have no time to spare.'
A second hiccup'd, 'Our old master's dead,
You'd better ask our mistress who's his heir.'
'Our mistress!' quoth a third: 'Our mistress!—pooh—
You mean our master—not the old, but new.'

44

These rascals, being new comers, knew not whom
' They thus address'd—and Lambro's visage fell—
And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
Pass'd, but he strove quite courteously to quell

The expression, and endeavouring to resume
His smile, requested one of them to tell
The name and quality of his new patron,
Who seem'd to have turn'd Haidée into a matron.

45

'I know not,' quoth the fellow, 'who or what
He is, nor whence he came—and little care;
But thus I know, that this roast capon's fat,
And that good wine ne'er wash'd down better fare;
And if you are not satisfied with that,
Direct your questions to my neighbour there;
He'll answer all for better or for worse,
For none likes more to hear himself converse.'

46

I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
And certainly he show'd the best of breeding,
Which scarce even France, the paragon of nations,
E'er saw her most polite of sons exceeding;
He bore these sneers against his near relations,
His own anxiety, his heart, too, bleeding,
The insults, too, of every servile glutton,
Who all the time was eating up his mutton.

47

Now in a person used to much command—
To bid men come, and go, and come again—
To see his orders done, too, out of hand—
Whether the word was death, or but the chain—
It may seem strange to find his manners bland;
Yet such things are, which I cannot explain,
Though doubtless he who can command himself
Is good to govern—almost as a Guelf.

48

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
But never in his real and serious mood;
Then calm, concentrated, and still, and slow,
He lay coil'd like the boa in the wood;

With him it never was a word and blow,
His angry word once o'er, he shed no blood,
But in his silence there was much to rue,
And his *one* blow left little work for *two*.

49

He ask'd no further questions, and proceeded
On to the house, but by a private way,
So that the few who met him hardly heeded,
So little they expected him that day;
If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
For Haidée's sake, is more than I can say,
But certainly to one deem'd dead returning,
This revel seem'd a curious mode of mourning.

50

If all the dead could now return to life,
(Which God forbid!) or some, or a great many,
For instance, if a husband or his wife
(Nuptial examples are as good as any),
No doubt, whate'er might be their former strife,
The present weather would be much more rainy—
Tears shed into the grave of the connexion
Would share most probably its resurrection.

51

He enter'd in the house no more his home,
A thing to human feelings the most trying,
And harder for the heart to overcome,
Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of dying;
To find our hearthstone turn'd into a tomb,
And round its once warm precincts pally lying
The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
Beyond a single gentleman's belief.

52

He enter'd in the house—his home no more,
For without hearts there is no home;—and felt
The solitude of passing his own door
Without a welcome: *there* he long had dwelt,

There his few peaceful days Time had swept o'er,
There his warm bosom and keen eye would melt
Over the innocence of that sweet child,
His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

53

He was a man of a strange temperament,
Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
For something better, if not wholly good;
His country's wrongs and his despair to save her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

54

The love of power, and rapid gain of gold,
The hardness by long habitude produced,
The dangerous life in which he had grown old
The mercy he had granted oft abused,
The sights he was accustom'd to behold,
The wild seas, and wild men with whom he cruised,
Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
And made him a good friend, but bad acquaintance.

55

But something of the spirit of old Greece
Flash'd o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
His predecessors in the Colchian days;
'Tis true he had no ardent love for peace—
Alas! his country show'd no path to praise:
Hate to the world and war with every nation
He waged, in vengeance of her degradation.

56

Still o'er his mind the influence of the clime
Shed its Ionian elegance, which show'd
Its power unconsciously full many a time,—
A taste seen in the choice of his abode,

A love of music and of scenes sublime,
A pleasure in the gentle stream that flow'd
Past him in crystal, and a joy in flowers,
Bedew'd his spirit in his calmer hours.

57

But whatso'er he had of love reposed
On that beloved daughter; she had been
The only thing which kept his heart unclosed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and seen,
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean
His feelings from all milk of human kindness,
And turn him like the Cyclops mad with blindness.

58

The cubless tigress in her jungle raging
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the flock;
The ocean when its yasty war is waging
Is awful to the vessel near the rock;
But violent things will sooner bear assuaging,
Their fury being spent by its own shock,
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire
Of a strong human heart, and in a sire.

59

It is a hard although a common case
To find our children running restive—they
In whom our brightest days we would retrace,
Our little selves re-formed in finer clay,
Just as old age is creeping on apace,
And clouds come o'er the sunset of our day,
They kindly leave us, though not quite alone,
But in good company—the gout or stone.

60

Yet a fine family is a fine thing
(Provided they don't come in after dinner);
'Tis beautiful to see a matron bring
Her children up (if nursing them don't thin her);

Like cherubs round an altar-piece they cling
To the fire-side (a sight to touch a sinner).
A lady with her daughters or her nieces
Shine like a guinea and seven-shilling pieces.

61

Old Lambro pass'd unseen a private gate,
And stood within his hall at eventide;
Meantime the lady and her lover sate
At wassail in their beauty and their pride:
An ivory inlaid table spread with state
Before them, and fair slaves on every side;
Gems, gold, and silver, form'd the service mostly,
Mother of pearl and coral the less costly.

62

The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
Lamb and pistachio nuts—in short, all meats,
And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and the fishes
Were of the finest that e'er flounced in nets,
Drest to a Sybarite's most pamper'd wishes;
The beverage was various sherbets
Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice,
Squeezed through the rind, which makes it best for use.

63

These were ranged round, each in its crystal ewer,
And fruits, and date-bread loaves closed the repast,
And Mocha's berry, from Arabia pure,
In small fine China cups, came in at last;
Gold cups of filigree made to secure
The hand from burning underneath them placed;
Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were boil'd
Up with the coffee, which (I think) they spoil'd.

64

The hangings of the room were tapestry, made
Of velvet panels, each of different hue,
And thick with damask flowers of silk inlaid;
And round them ran a yellow border too;

The upper border, richly wrought, display'd,
Embroider'd delicately o'er with blue,
Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
From poets, or the moralists their betters.

65

These Oriental writings on the wall,
Quite common in those countries, are a kind
Of monitors adapted to recall,
Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to the mind
The words which shook Belshazzar in his hall,
And took his kingdom from him: You will find,
Though sages may pour out their wisdom's treasure,
There is no sterner moralist than Pleasure.

66

A beauty at the season's close grown hectic,
A genius who has drunk himself to death,
A rake turn'd methodistic, or Eclectic—
(For that's the name they like to pray beneath)—
But most, an alderman struck apoplectic,
Are things that really take away the breath,—
And show that late hours, wine, and love are able
To do not much less damage than the table.

67

Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet
On crimson satin, border'd with pale blue;
Their sofa occupied three parts complete
Of the apartment—and appear'd quite new;
The velvet cushions (for a throne more meet)
Were scarlet, from whose glowing centre grew
A sun emboss'd in gold, whose rays of tissue,
Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.

68

Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour; Indian mats
And Persian carpets, which the heart bled to stain,
Over the floors were spread; gazelles and cats,

And dwarfs and blacks, and such like things that gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites—(that's
To say, by degradation)—mingled there
As plentiful as in a court or fair.

69

There was no want of lofty mirrors, and
The tables, most of ebony inlaid
With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at hand,
Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made,
Fretted with gold or silver:—by command,
The greater part of these were ready spread
With viands and sherbets in ice—and wine—
Kept for all comers at all hours to dine.

70

Of all the dresses I select Haidée's:
She wore two jelicks—one was of pale yellow;
Of azure, pink, and white was her chemise—
'Neath which her breast heaved like a little billow,
With buttons form'd of pearls as large as peas,
All gold and crimson shone her jelick's fellow,
And the striped white gauze baracan that bound her,
Like fleecy clouds about the moon, flow'd round her.

71

One large gold bracelet clasp'd each lovely arm,
Lockless—so pliable from the pure gold
That the hand stretch'd and shut it without harm,
The limb which it adorn'd its only mould;
So beautiful—its very shape would charm,
And clinging as if loath to lose its hold,
The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
That e'er by precious metal was held in.

72

Around, as princess of her father's land
A like gold bar above her instep roll'd
Announced her rank; twelve rings were on her hand;
Her hair was starr'd with gems; her veil's fine fold

Below her breast was fasten'd with a band
Of lavish pearls, whose worth could scarce be told;
Her orange silk full Turkish trousers furl'd
About the prettiest ankle in the world.

73

Her hair's long auburn waves down to her heel
Flow'd like an Alpine torrent which the sun
Dyes with his morning light,—and would conceal
Her person if allow'd at large to run,
And still they seem'd resentfully to feel
The silken fillet's curb, and sought to shun
Their bonds whene'er some Zephyr caught began
To offer his young pinion as her fan.

74

Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
Too pure even for the purest human ties;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

75

Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged
(It is the country's custom), but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
The glossy rebels mock'd the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touch'd with henna; but again
The power of art was turn'd to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before.

76

The henna should be deeply dyed to make
The skin relieved appear more fairly fair;
She had no need of this, day ne'er will break
On mountain-tops more heavenly white than her:

The eye might doubt if it were well awake,
She was so like a vision; I might err,
But Shakspeare also says, 'tis very silly
'To gild refined gold, or paint the lily.'

77

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might behold,
Like small stars through the milky way apparent;
His turban furl'd in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette with Haidée's hair in't
Surmounted, as its clasp, a glowing crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.

78

And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing-girls, black eunuchs, and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to show it;
His verses rarely wanted their due feet—
And for his theme—he seldom sung below it,
He being paid to satirise or flatter,
As the psalm says, 'inditing a good matter.'

79

He praised the present, and abused the past,
Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turn'd, preferring pudding to *no* praise—
For some few years his lot had been o'ercast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
With truth like Southey, and with verse like Crashaw.

80

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle;
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fix'd—he knew the way to wheedle:

So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee'd ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention—
There was no doubt he earn'd his laureate pension.

81

But he had genius,—when a turncoat has it,
The 'Vates irritabilis' takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass it;
Even good men like to make the public stare:—
But to my subject—let me see—what was it?—
Oh!—the third canto—and the pretty pair—
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

82

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still deign'd to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause.

83

But now being lifted into high society,
And having pick'd up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels, for variety,
He deem'd, being in a lone isle, among friends,
That without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends;
And singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.

84

He had travell'd 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different nations;
And having lived with people of all ranks,
Had something ready upon most occasions—

Which got him a few presents and some thanks.
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To 'do at Rome as Romans do,' a piece
Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

85

Thus, usually, when he was asked to sing,
He gave the different nations something national;
'Twas all the same to him—'God save the king,'
Or '*Ça ira*,' according to the fashion all:
His muse made increment of anything,
From the high lyric down to the low rational:
If Pindar sang horse-races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

86

In France, for instance, he would write a chanson;
In England a six-canto quarto tale;
In Spain he'd make a ballad or romance on
The last war—much the same in Portugal;
In Germany, the Pegasus he'd prance on
Would be old Goethe's—(see what says De Staël);
In Italy he'd ape the 'Trecentisti';
In Greece, he'd sing some sort of hymn like this t' ye:

I

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

II

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse:
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

III

The mountains look on Marathon—
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

IV

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they?

V

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

VI

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

VII

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

VIII

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!'—
'Tis but the living who are dumb.

IX

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

X

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

XI

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

XII

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

XIII

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

XIV

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells:
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

XV

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

XVI

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

87

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse:

His strain display'd some feeling—right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours—like the hands of dyers.

88

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper—even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his!

89

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

90

And glory long has made the sages smile;
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion, wind—
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

91

Milton's the prince of poets—so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day—
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;

But his life falling into Johnson's way,
We're told this great high priest of all the Nine
Was whipt at college—a harsh sire—odd spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

92

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,
Like Shakspeare's stealing deer, Lord Bacon's bribes;
Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest acts;
Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well describes);
Like Cromwell's pranks;—but although truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

93

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy';
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

94

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare biography,
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy frowzy poem, call'd the 'Excursion',
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

95

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect:
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers, like
Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,

Are things which, in this century don't strike
 The public mind,—so few are the elect;
 And the new births of both their stale virginities
 Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

96

But let me to my story: I must own,
 If I have any fault, it is digression,
 Leaving my people to proceed alone,
 While I soliloquize beyond expression:
 But these are my addresses from the throne,
 Which put off business to the ensuing session:
 Forgetting each omission is a loss to
 The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

97

I know that what our neighbours call '*longueurs*,'
 (We've no so good a word, but have the *thing*,
 In that complete perfection which insures
 An epic from Bob Southey every Spring—)
 Form not the true temptation which allures
 The reader; but 'twould not be hard to bring
 Some fine examples of the *épopée*,
 To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

98

We learn from Horace, 'Homer sometimes sleeps;
 We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes,—
 To show with what complacency he creeps,
 With his dear '*Waggoners*,' around his lakes.
 He wishes for 'a boat' to sail the deeps—
 Of ocean?—No, of air; and then he makes
 Another outcry for 'a little boat,'
 And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

99

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
 And Pegasus runs restive in his '*Waggon*,
 Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?
 Or pray Medea for a single dragon?

Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
 He fear'd his neck to venture such a nag on,
 And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
 Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

100

'Pedlars,' and 'Boats,' and 'Waggons!' Oh! ye shades
 Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?
 That trash of such sort not alone evades
 Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
 Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades
 Of sense and song above your graves may hiss—
 The 'little boatman' and his 'Peter Bell'
 Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitophel'!

101

T' our tale.—The feast was over, the slaves gone,
 The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
 The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
 And every sound of revelry expired;
 The lady and her lover, left alone,
 The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired;—
 Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
 That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

102

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
 The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
 Have felt that moment in its fullest power
 Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
 While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
 Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
 And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
 And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer.

103

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!
 Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of love!
 Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
 Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!

Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!

Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove—
What though 'tis but a pictured image?—strike—
That painting is no idol,—'tis too like.

104

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print—that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars,—all that springs from the great
Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

105

Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd
o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

106

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover,—shadow'd my mind's eye.

107

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

108

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay:
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

109

When Nero perish'd by the justest doom
Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed, and the world overjoy'd,
Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon his tomb:
Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

110

But I'm digressing; what on earth has Nero,
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow man—the moon s?
Sure my invention must be down at zero,
And I grown one of many 'wooden spoons'
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honours in degrees).

III

I feel this tediousness will never do—

'Tis being *too* epic, and I must cut down
(In copy'ing) this long canto into two;

They'll never find it out, unless I own
The fact, excepting some experienced few;

And then as an improvement 'twill be shown:

I'll prove that such the opinion of the critic is
From Aristotle *passim*.—See Ποιητικης.

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
For oftentimes when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer when hurl'd from heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

2

But time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man,—and, as we would hope,—perhaps the devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
We know not this—the blood flows on too fast:
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

3

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wish'd that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
Leaf,' and Imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

4

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'Tis that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep

Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

5

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line;
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

6

To the kind reader of our sober clime
This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sure of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And revell'd in the fancies of the time,
True knights, chaste dames, huge giant kings despotic;
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet.

7

How I have treated it, I do not know;
Perhaps no better than they have treated me,
Who have imputed such designs as show
Not what they saw, but what they wish'd to see;
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so,
This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:
Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
And tells me to resume my story here.

8

Young Juan and his lady-love were left
To their own hearts' most sweet society;
Even Time the pitiless in sorrow cleft
With his rude scythe such gentle bosoms; he

Sigh'd to behold them of their hours bereft,
Though foe to love; and yet they could not be
Meant to grow old, but die in happy spring,
Before one charm or hope had taken wing.

9

Their faces were not made for wrinkles, their
Pure blood to stagnate, their great hearts to fail;
The blank grey was not made to blast their hair,
But like the climes that know nor snow nor hail,
They were all summer; lightning might assail
And shiver them to ashes, but to trail
A long and snake-like life of dull decay
Was not for them—they had too little clay.

10

They were alone once more; for them to be
Thus was another Eden; they were never
Weary, unless when separate: the tree
Cut from its forest root of years—the river
Damm'd from its fountain—the child from the knee
And breast maternal wean'd at once for ever,—
Would wither less than these two torn apart;
Alas! there is no instinct like the heart—

11

The heart—which may be broken: happy they!
Thrice fortunate! who of that fragile mould,
The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er behold
The long year link'd with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told;
While life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die.

12

'Whom the gods love die young' was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays even more—
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,

Except mere breath; and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save.

13

Haidéc and Juan thought not of the dead.
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to condemn;
Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
And knew such brightness was but the reflection
Of their exchanging glances of affection.

14

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much;
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard.

15

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
And children still they should have ever been;
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her beloved, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
And never know the weight of human hours.

16

Moons changing had roll'd on, and changeless found
Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
And these were not of the vain kind which cloy,

For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses and that which destroys.
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

17

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!
But theirs was love in which the mind delights
To lose itself, when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its hack sounds and sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a whore.

18

Hard words; harsh truth; a truth which many know.
Enough.—The faithful and the fairy pair,
Who never found a single hour too slow,
What was it made them thus exempt from care?
Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were
Inherent; what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic.

19

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,
But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,
For Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no reason for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or doves.

20

They gazed upon the sunset; 'tis an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to *their eyes*,
For it had made them what they were: the power
Of love had first o'erwhelm'd them from such skies,

When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them link'd in passion's ties;
Charm'd with each other, all things charm'd that brought
The past still welcome as the present thought.

21

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,
And swept, as 'twere, across their hearts' delight,
Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,
When one is shook in sound, and one in sight:
And thus some boding flash'd through either frame,
And call'd from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,
While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

22

That large black prophet eye seem'd to dilate
And follow far the disappearing sun,
As if their last day of a happy date
With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone.
Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate—
He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,
His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

23

She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that sort
Which makes not others smile; then turn'd aside:
Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,
And master'd by her wisdom or her pride;
When Juan spoke, too—it might be in sport—
Of this their mutual feeling, she replied—
'If it should be so,—but—it cannot be—
Or I at least shall not survive to see.'

24

Juan would question further, but she press'd
His lips to hers, and silenced him with this,
And then dismiss'd the omen from her breast,
Defying augury with that fond kiss;

And no doubt of all methods 'tis the best:
Some people prefer wine—'tis not amiss;
I have tried both; so those who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache.

25

One of the two according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
But which to choose, I really hardly know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons show,
And then decide, without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.

26

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless tenderness,
Which mix'd all feelings, friend, child, lover, brother;
All that the best can mingle and express
When two pure hearts are pour'd in one another,
And love too much, and yet cannot love less;
But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

27

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
Why did they not then die?—they had lived too long
Should an hour come to bid them breathe apart;
Years could but bring them cruel things or wrong;
The world was not for them, nor the world's art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
It was their very spirit—not a sense.

28

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care;

How lonely every freeborn creature broods!

The sweet song-birds nestle in a pair;

The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow

Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

29

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,

Haidée and Juan their siesta took,

A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,

For ever and anon a something shook

Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;

And Haidée's sweet lips murmur'd like a brook

A wordless music, and her face so fair

Stirr'd with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air;

30

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream

Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind

Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,

The mystical usurper of the mind—

O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem

Good to the soul which we no more can bind:

Strange state of being! (for 'tis still to be),

Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see.

31

She dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,

Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but stir

She could not from the spot, and the loud roar

Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;

And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,

Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon they were

Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high—

Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

32

Anon—she was released, and then she stray'd

O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,

And stumbled almost every step she made;

And something roll'd before her in a sheet,

Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
'Twas white and indistinct, nor stopp'd to meet
Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed and grasp'd,
And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

33

The dream changed:—in a cave she stood, its walls
Were hung with marble icicles; the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and
lurk;
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks look'd below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell,—she thought.

34

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead brow,
Which she essay'd in vain to clear, (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seem'd they now!)
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
Of his quench'd heart; and the sea dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

35

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or alter'd into something new—
Like to her father's features, till each trace
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew—
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?
Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'Tis—'tis her father's—fix'd upon the pair!

36

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
Him whom she deem'd a habitant where dwell
The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be

Perchance the death of one she loved too well:
Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
It was a moment of that awful kind—
I have seen such—but must not call to mind.

37

Up Juan sprang to Haidée's bitter shriek,
And caught her falling, and from off the wall
Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
Vengeance on him who was the cause of all:
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my call,
A thousand scimitars await the word;
Put up, young man, put up your silly sword.'

38

And Haidée clung around him; 'Juan, 'tis—
'Tis Lambro—'tis my father! Kneel with me—
He will forgive us—yes—it must be—yes.
Oh! dearest father, in this agony
Of pleasure and of pain—even while I kiss
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy.'

39

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye—
Not always signs with him of calmest mood:
He look'd upon her, but gave no reply;
Then turn'd to Juan, in whose cheek the blood
Oft came and went, as there resolved to die;
In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

40

'Young man, your sword,' so Lambro once more said:
Juan replied, 'Not while this arm is free.'
The old man's cheek grew pale, but not with dread.
And drawing from his belt a pistol, he

Replied, 'Your blood be then on your own head.'

Then look'd close at the flint, as if to see
'Twas fresh—for he had lately used the lock—
And next proceeded quietly to cock.

41

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;
A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
If you have got a former friend for foe;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

42

Lambro presented, and one instant more
Had stopp'd this Canto, and Don Juan's breath,
When Haidée threw herself her boy before;
Stern as her sire: 'On me,' she cried, 'let death
Descend—the fault is mine; this fatal shore
He found—but sought not. I have pledged my faith;
I love him—I will die with him: I knew
Your nature's firmness—know your daughter's too.'

43

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy; but now
She stood as one who champion'd human fears—
Pale, statue-like, and stern, she woo'd the blow;
And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
She drew up to her height, as if to show
A fairer mark; and with a fix'd eye scann'd
Her father's face—but never stopp'd his hand.

44

He gazed on her, and she on him; 'twas strange
How like they look'd! the expression was the same;
Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame;

For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
If cause should be—a lioness, though tame;
Her father's blood before her father's face
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

45

I said they were alike, their features and
Their stature, differing but in sex and years:
Even to the delicacy of their hand
There was resemblance, such as true blood wears;
And now to see them, thus divided, stand
In fix'd ferocity, when joyous tears,
And sweet sensations, should have welcomed both,
Show what the passions are in their full growth.

46

The father paused a moment, then withdrew
His weapon, and replaced it; but stood still,
And looking on her, as to look her through,
'Not I,' he said, 'have sought this stranger's ill;
Not I have made this desolation: few
Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill;
But I must do my duty—how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

47

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
His own shall roll before you like a ball!'
He raised his whistle as the word he said,
And blew; another answer'd to the call,
And rushing in disorderly, though led,
And arm'd from boot to turban, one and all,
Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word, 'Arrest or slay the Frank.'

48

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew
His daughter; while compress'd within his clasp,
'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father's grasp—

His arms were like a serpent's coil: then flew
Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates: save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

49

The second had his cheek laid open; but
The third, a wary, cool old swordsman, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
His own well in; so well, ere you could look,
His man was floor'd, and helpless at his foot,
With the blood running like a little brook
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red—
One on the arm, the other on the head.

50

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore
Juan from the apartment: with a sign
Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.
They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reach'd some galliots, placed in line;
On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stow'd him, with strict orders to the watches.

51

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:
A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,
Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing, is suddenly to sea sent,
Wounded and chain'd, so that he cannot move,
And all because a lady fell in love.

52

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,

I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea:
'Tis pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious.

53

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Naïad of the Phlegethontic rill!
Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but *rack*
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

54

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe—
Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;
Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom bounded!
She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued because surrounded,
Her mother was a Moorish maid from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

55

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble fountains; there grain, and flour, and fruit,
Gush from the earth until the land runs o'er;
But there, too, many a poison-tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,
Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

56

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
Her human clay is kindled; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,

And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:
Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's dower;
But her large dark eye show'd deep Passion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

57

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,
Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth, and fair,
Till slowly charged with thunder they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;
But overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

58

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermaster'd and cut down;
His blood was running on the very floor
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own;
Thus much she view'd an instant and no more,—
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan;
On her sire's arm, which until now scarce held
Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell'd.

59

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;
And her head droop'd, as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd handmaids bore
Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

60

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill—
With nothing livid, still her lips were red;
She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent still;
No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely dead;

Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of soul—
She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

61

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,
But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect throws
O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;
O'er the Laocoön's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

62

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

63

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;
She saw them watch her without asking why,
And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

64

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
She recognised no being, and no spot,
However dear or cherish'd in their day;

They changed from room to room, but all forgot,
Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful meaning.

65

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he began a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

66

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being; in a gushing stream.
The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolv'd in rain.

67

Short solace, vain relief!—thought came too quick,
And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
Although her paroxysm drew towards its close;—
Hers was a phrensy which disdain'd to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

68

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense.
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;

Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Avail'd for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep—the power seem'd gone for ever.

69

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus; at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her passed:
And they who watch'd her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes—the beautiful, the black—
Oh! to possess such lustre—and then lack!

70

She died, but not alone; she held within
A second principle of life, which might
Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of sin;
But closed its little being without light,
And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
Blossom and bough lie wither'd with one blight;
In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.

71

Thus lived—thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth: her days and pleasures were
Brief, but delightful—such as had not stayed
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

72

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd away;
None but her own and father's grave is there,
And nothing outward tells of human clay;

Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
No stone is there to show, no tongue to say,
What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

73

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
Sighs o'er her name; and many an islander
With her sire's story makes the night less long;
Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with her;
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong—
A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

74

But let me change this theme, which grows too sad,
And lay this sheet of sorrows on the shelf;
I don't much like describing people mad,
For fear of seeming rather touch'd myself—
Besides, I've no more on this head to add;
And as my Muse is a capricious elf,
We'll put about, and try another tack
With Juan, left half-kill'd some stanzas back.

75

Wounded and fetter'd, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,'
Some days and nights elapsed before that he
Could altogether call the past to mind;
And when he did, he found himself at sea,
Sailing six knots an hour before the wind;
The shores of Ilion lay beneath their lee—
Another time he might have liked to see 'em,
But now was not much pleased with Cape Sigæum.

76

There, on the green and village-cotted hill, is
(Flank'd by the Hellespont, and by the sea)
Entomb'd the bravest of the brave, Achilles;
They say so—(Bryant says the contrary):

And further downward, tall and towering still, is
The tumulus—of whom? Heaven knows; 't may be
Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus;
All heroes, who if living still would slay us.

77

High barrows, without marble, or a name,
A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted plain,
And Ida in the distance, still the same,
And old Scamander (if 'tis he), remain;
The situation seems still form'd for fame—
A hundred thousand men might fight again,
With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's walls,
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls;

78

Troops of untended horses; here and there,
Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth;
Some shepherds (unlike Paris), led to stare
A moment at the European youth
Whom to the spot their school-boy feelings bear;
A Turk, with beads in hand, and pipe in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,
Are what I found there—but the devil a Phrygian.

79

Don Juan, here permitted to emerge
From his dull cabin, found himself a slave;
Forlorn, and gazing on the deep blue surge,
O'ershadow'd there by many a hero's grave;
Weak still with loss of blood, he scarce could urge
A few brief questions; and the answers gave
No very satisfactory information
About his past or present situation.

80

He saw some fellow-captives, who appear'd
To be Italians, as they were in fact;
From them, at least, *their* destiny he heard,
Which was an odd one; a troop going to act

In Sicily—all singers, duly rear'd
In their vocation; had not been attack'd
In sailing from Livorno by the pirate,
But sold by the impresario at no high rate.

81

By one of these, the buffo of the party,
Juan was told about their curious case;
For although destined to the Turkish mart, he
Still kept his spirits up—at least his face;
The little fellow really look'd quite hearty,
And bore him with some gaiety and grace,
Showing a much more reconciled demeanour,
Than did the prima-donna and the tenor.

82

In a few words he told their hapless story,
Saying, 'Our Machiavelian impresario,
Making a signal off some promontory,
'Till'd a strange brig; Corpo di Caio Mario!
We were transferr'd on board her in a hurry,
Without a single scudo of salario;
But if the Sultan has a taste for song,
We will revive our fortunes before long.

83

'The prima-donna, though a little old,
And haggard with a dissipated life,
And subject, when the house is thin, to cold,
Has some good notes; and then the tenor's wife,
With no great voice, is pleasing to behold;
Last carnival she made a deal of strife,
By carrying off Count Cesare Cicogna
From an old Roman princess at Bologna.

84

'And then there are the dancers; there's the Nini,
With more than one profession gains by all;
Then there's that laughing slut the Pelegrini,
'She, too; was fortunate last carnival,'

And made at least five hundred good zecchini,
But spends so fast, she has not now a paul;
And then there's the Grottesca—such a dancer!
Where men have souls or bodies she must answer.

85

'As for the figuranti, they are like
The rest of all that tribe; with here and there
A pretty person, which perhaps may strike,
The rest are hardly fitted for a fair;
There's one, though tall and stiffer than a pike,
Yet has a sentimental kind of air
Which might go far, but she don't dance with vigour;
The more's the pity, with her face and figure.

86

'As for the men, they are a middling set;
The musico is but a crack'd old basin,
But being qualified in one way yet,
May the seraglio do to set his face in,
And as a servant some preferment get;
His singing I no further trust can place in:
From all the Pope makes yearly 'twould perplex
To find three perfect pipes of the *third* sex.

87

'The tenor's voice is spoilt by affectation,
And for the bass, the beast can only bellow;
In fact, he had no singing education,
An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow;
But being the prima-donna's near relation,
Who swore his voice was very rich and mellow,
They hired him, though to hear him you'd believe
An ass was practising recitative.

88

"'Twould not become myself to dwell upon
My own merits, and though young—I see, sir—you
Have got a travell'd air, which speaks you one
To whom the opera is by no means new:

You've heard of Raucocanti?—I'm the man:
The time may come when you may hear me too;
You was not last year at the fair of Lugo,
But next, when I'm engaged to sing there—do go.

89

'Our baritone I almost had forgot,
A pretty lad, but bursting with conceit;
With graceful action, science not a jot,
A voice of no great compass, and not sweet,
He always is complaining of his lot,
Forsooth, scarce fit for ballads in the street;
In lovers' parts his passion more to breathe,
Having no heart to show, he shows his teeth.'

90

Here Raucocanti's eloquent recital
Was interrupted by the pirate crew,
Who came at stated moments to invite all
The captives back to their sad berths; each threw
A rueful glance upon the waves, (which bright all
From the blue skies derived a double blue,
Dancing all free and happy in the sun,)
And then went down the hatchway one by one.

91

They heard next day—that in the Dardanelles,
Waiting for his Sublimity's firman,
The most imperative of sovereign spells,
Which everybody does without who can,
More to secure them in their naval cells,
Lady to lady, well as man to man,
Were to be chain'd and lotted out per couple,
For the slave-market of Constantinople.

92

It seems when this allotment was made out,
There chanced to be an odd male, and odd female,
Who (after some discussion and some doubt,
If the soprano might be deem'd to be male,

They placed him o'er the woman as a scout)
 Were link'd together, and it happen'd the male
 Was Juan, who,—an awkward thing at his age,
 Pair'd off with a Bacchante blooming visage.

93

With Raucocanti lucklessly was chain'd
 The tenor; these two hated with a hate
 Found only on the stage, and each more pain'd
 With this his tuneful neighbour than his fate;
 Sad strife arose, for they were so cross-grain'd,
 Instead of bearing up without debate,
 That each pull'd different ways with many an oath,
 'Arcades ambo,' *id est*—blackguards both.

94

Juan's companion was a Romagnole,
 But bred within the March of old Ancona,
 With eyes that look'd into the very soul
 (And other chief points of a 'bella donna'),
 Bright—and as black and burning as a coal;
 And through her clear brunette complexion shone a
 Great wish to please—a most attractive dower,
 Especially when added to the power.

95

But all that power was wasted upon him,
 For sorrow o'er each sense held stern command;
 Her eye might flash on his, but found it dim:
 And though thus chain'd, as natural her hand
 Touch'd his, nor that—nor any handsome limb
 (And she had some not easy to withstand)
 Could stir his pulse, or make his faith feel brittle;
 Perhaps his recent wounds might help a little.

96

No matter; we should ne'er too much inquire,
 But facts are facts: no knight could be more true,
 And firmer faith no ladye-love desire;
 We will omit the proofs, save one or two:

'Tis said no one in hand 'can hold a fire
By thought of frosty Caucasus; but few,
I really think; yet Juan's then ordeal
Was more triumphant, and not much less real.

97

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
Having withstood temptation in my youth,
But hear that several people take exception
At the first two books having too much truth;
Therefore I'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is
To pass, than those two cantos into families.

98

'Tis all the same to me; I'm fond of yielding,
And therefore leave them to the purer page
Of Smollett, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,
Who say strange things for so correct an age;
I once had great alacrity in wielding
My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
And recollect the time when all this cant
Would have provoked remarks which now it shan't.

99

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a squabble;
But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble,
Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to cease
While the right hand which wrote it still is able,
Or of some centuries to take a lease;
The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.

100

Of poets who come down to us through distance
Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of existence;
Where twenty ages gather o'er a nanie,

'Tis as a snow-ball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,
Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
But, after all, 'tis nothing but cold snow.

101

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
And love of glory's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all
Who would as 'twere identify their dust
From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
Leaves nothing till 'the coming of the just'—
Save change: I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Roine.

102

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral gloom
Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal death.

103

I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perish'd in his fame the hero-boy,
Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
For human vanity, the young De Foix!
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which neglect is hastening to destroy,
Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

104

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid:
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column:

The time must come, when both alike decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

105

With human blood that column was cemented,
With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were vented
To show his loathing of the spot he soil'd:
Thus is the trophy used, and thus lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds, from whose wild
Instinct of gore and glory earth has known
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

106

Yet there will still be bards: though fame is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then they sought:
As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

107

If in the course of such a life as was
At once adventurous and contemplative,
Men who partake all passions as they pass,
Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
Their images again as in a glass,
And in such colours that they seem to live;
You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,
But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

108

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
Benign Ceruleans of the second sex!
Who advertise new poems by your looks,
Your 'imprimatur' will ye not annex?

What! must I go to the oblivious cooks,
Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?
Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea?

109

What! can I prove 'a lion' then no more?
A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling?
To bear the compliments of many a bore,
And sigh, 'I can't get out,' like Yorick's starling;
Why then I'll swear, as poet Wordy swore
(Because the world won't read him, always snarling),
That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery,
Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie.

110

Oh! 'darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,'
As some one somewhere sings about the sky,
And I, ye learned ladies, say of you;
They say your stockings are so—(Heaven knows why,
I have examined few pair of that hue);
Blue as the garters which serenely lie
Round the patrician left-legs, which adorn
The festal midnight, and the levée morn.

111

Yet some of you are most seraphic creatures—
But times are alter'd since, a rhyming lover,
You read my stanzas, and I read your features:
And—but no matter, all those things are over;
Still I have no dislike to learned natures,
For sometimes such a world of virtues cover;
I knew one woman of that purple school,
The loveliest, chastest, best, but—quite a fool.

112

Humboldt, 'the first of travellers,' but not
The last, if late accounts be accurate,
Invented, by some name I have forgot,
As well as the sublime discovery's date,

An airy instrument, with which he sought
To ascertain the atmospheric state,
By measuring 'the *intensity of blue*':
Oh, Lady Daphne! let me measure you!

113

But to the narrative:—The vessel bound
With slaves to sell off in the capital,
After the usual process, might be found
At anchor under the seraglio wall;
Her cargo, from the plague being safe and sound,
Were landed in the market, one and all,
And there with Georgians, Russians, and Circassians,
Bought up for different purposes and passions.

114

Some went off dearly; fifteen hundred dollars
For one Circassian, a sweet girl, were given,
Warranted virgin; beauty's brightest colours
Had deck'd her out in all the hues of heaven:
Her sale sent home some disappointed bawlers,
Who bade on till the hundreds reached eleven;
But when the offer went beyond, they knew
'Twas for the Sultan, and at once withdrew.

115

Twelve negresses from Nubia brought a price
Which the West Indian market scarce could bring,
Though Wilberforce, at last, has made it twice
What 'twas ere Abolition; and the thing
Need not seem very wonderful, for vice
Is always much more splendid than a king:
The virtues, even the most exalted, Charity,
Are saving—vice spares nothing for a rarity.

116

But for the destiny of this young troop,
How some were bought by pachas, some by Jews,
How some to burdens were obliged to stoop,
And others rose to the command of crews

As renegadoes; while in hapless group,
Hoping no very old vizier might choose,
The females stood, as one by one they pick'd 'em,
To make a mistress, or fourth wife, or victim:

117

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our hero's lot, howe'er unpleasant
(Because this Canto has become too long),
Must be postponed discreetly for the present;
I'm sensible redundancy is wrong,
But could not for the muse of me put less in't:
And now delay the progress of Don Juan,
Till what is call'd in Ossian the fifth Duan.

Francesca of Rimini

Byron, during his later years, seems to have become a keen student of Italian literature; and the story of the two unhappy lovers, helpless victims of an irresistible passion, whom Dante in the Fifth Canto of his *Inferno* represents as being condemned to sweep round and round upon the whirlwind, naturally made a strong appeal to his poetic imagination. Cary's blank verse rendering of Dante's text had appeared in 1814; and Byron determined to produce a translation 'versed like the original,' getting as close as he could to the form and spirit of Italian *terza rima*. His translation of lines 97 to 142 was despatched from Ravenna on March 20th, 1820.

FROM THE INFERNO OF DANTE

CANTO THE FIFTH

'The land where I was born sits by the seas,
Upon that shore to which the Po descends,
With all his followers, in search of peace.
Love, which the gentle heart soon apprehends,
Seized him for the fair person which was ta'en
From me, and me even yet the mode offends.
Love, who to none beloved to love again
Remits, seized me with wish to please, so strong,
That, as thou seest, yet, yet it doth remain.
Love to one death conducted us along,
But Caina waits for him our life who ended.'
These were the accents utter'd by her tongue.—
Since I first listen'd to these souls offended,
I bow'd my visage, and so kept it till—
'What think'st thou,' said the bard; when I unbended,
And recommenced: 'Alas! unto such ill
How many sweet thoughts, what strong ecstasies,
Led these their evil fortune to fulfil!'

FRANCESCA OF RIMINI

And then I turn'd unto their side my eyes,
And said, 'Francesca, thy sad destinies
Have made me sorrow till the tears arise.
But tell me, in the season of sweet sighs,
By what and how thy love to passion rose,
So as his dim desires to recognise?'
Then she to me: 'The greatest of all woes
Is to remind us of our happy days
In misery, and that thy teacher knows.
But if to learn our passion's first root preys
Upon thy spirit with such sympathy,
I will do even as he who weeps and says.
We read one day for pastime, seated high,
Of Lancilot, how love enchain'd him too.
We were alone, quite unsuspectingly.
But oft our eyes met, and our cheeks in hue
All o'er discolour'd by that reading were;
But one point only wholly us o'erthrew;
When we read the long-sigh'd-for smile of her,
To be thus kiss'd by such devoted lover,
He who from me can be divided ne'er
Kiss'd my mouth, trembling in the act all over:
Accursed was the book and he who wrote!
That day no further leaf we did uncover.'
While thus one spirit told us of their lot,
The other wept, so that with pity's thralls
I swoon'd, as if by death I had been smote
And fell down even as a dead body falls.

Shorter Poems

In the stricter sense of the term, Byron was not a lyric poet. He achieved his most splendid effect through expansion, rather than through compression, of his gifts; but now and then he produced a short poem in which his genius seems to have materialised. The present selection covers a wide range. It includes poems that are purely lyrical—such as *She Walks in Beauty*, *Stanzas for Music* and the beautiful song, *So We'll Go No More A-Roving*, written during the aftermath of the Venetian carnival—descriptive and reflective verses, such as *Churchill's Grave*, *The Dream* and *Epistle to Augusta*—and the savagely satirical *Sketch*, in which he belaboured his wife's former governess, 'the respectable Mrs. Clermont,' who, so he believed, had helped to bring about the collapse of his ill-starred marriage.

REMEMBER THEE! REMEMBER THEE!

I

Remember thee! remember thee!
Till Lethe quench Life's burning stream
Remorse and Shame shall cling to thee,
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

2

Remember thee! Aye, doubt it not:
Thy husband too shall think of thee:
By neither shalt thou be forgot,
Thou *false* to him, thou *fiend* to me!

¹ This violent little poem—originally published by Medwin in his indiscreet but illuminating volume of Byronic reminiscences—was directed at the poet's first fashionable mistress, Lady Caroline Lamb, who had burst into his lodgings and, on the flyleaf of a copy of *Vathek* which she found on his table, had scribbled the admonition: 'Remember Me!'

SHORTER POEMS

REMEMBER HIM, WHOM PASSION'S POWER¹

I

Remember him, whom Passion's power
Severely—deeply—vainly proved:
Remember thou that dangerous hour,
When neither fell, though both were loved.

2

That yielding breast, that melting eye,
Too much invited to be blessed:
That gentle prayer, that pleading sigh,
The wilder wish reproved, repressed.

3

Oh! let me feel that all I lost
But saved thee all that Conscience fears;
And blush for every pang it cost
To spare the vain remorse of years.

4

Yet think of this when many a tongue,
Whose busy accents whisper blame,
Would do the heart that loved thee wrong,
And brand a nearly blighted name.

5

Think that, whate'er to others, thou
Hast seen each selfish thought subdued:
I bless thy purer soul even now,
Even now, in midnight solitude.

6

Oh, God! that we had met in time,
Our hearts as fond, thy hand more free;
When thou hadst loved without a crime,
And I been less unworthy thee!

¹ Composed in 1813, these lines appear to have been precipitated by Byron's relationship with Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster.

7

Far may thy days, as heretofore,
From thus our gaudy world be past!
And that too bitter moment o'er,
Oh! may such trial be thy last.

8

This heart, alas! perverted long,
Itself destroyed might there destroy;
To meet thee in the glittering throng,
Would wake Presumption's hope of joy.

9

Then to the things whose bliss or woe,
Like mine, is wild and worthless all,
That world resign—such scenes forego,
Where those who feel must surely fall.

10

Thy youth, thy charms, thy tenderness—
Thy soul from long seclusion pure;
From what even here hath passed, may guess
What there thy bosom must endure.

11

Oh! pardon that imploring tear,
Since not by Virtue shed in vain,
My frenzy drew from eyes so dear;
For me they shall not weep again.

12

Though long and mournful must it be,
The thought that we no more may meet;
Yet I deserve the stern decree,
And almost deem the sentence sweet.

13

Still—had I loved thee less—my heart
Had then less sacrificed to thine;
It felt not half so much to part
As if its guilt had made thee mine.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY¹

I

She walks in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

2

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

3

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

¹ Wedderburn Webster, the husband of the exquisite and disconsolate Lady Frances, describes how he persuaded Byron to attend a party given by the famous blue-stocking Lady Sirwell, where the poet encountered the wife of a second cousin, the beautiful Mrs. Wilmot, who wore a black dress sewn with luminous spangles. On returning home, Byron desired his valet to give him a 'tumbler of Brandy' which he drank to Mrs. Wilmot's health. He was 'in a sad state all night'; but, next morning, he dashed off this delightful lyric.

IF THAT HIGH WORLD¹

I

If that high world, which lies beyond
 Our own, surviving Love endears;
 If there the cherished heart be fond,
 The eye the same, except in tears—
 How welcome those untrodden spheres!
 How sweet this very hour to die!
 To soar from earth and find all fears
 Lost in thy light—Eternity!

2

It must be so: 'tis not for self
 That we so tremble on the brink;
 And striving to o'erleap the gulf,
 Yet cling to Being's severing link.
 Oh! in that future let us think
 To hold, each heart, the heart that shares;
 With them the immortal waters drink,
 And, soul in soul, grow deathless theirs!

OH! SNATCHED AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM²

I

Oh! snatched away in Beauty's bloom,
 On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
 But on thy turf shall roses rear
 Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
 And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

2

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
 Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
 And feed deep thought with many a dream,
 And lingering pause and lightly tread;
 Fond wretch! as if her step disturbed the dead!

Written at the end of 1815: published among *Hebrew Melodies*.

² Published among *Hebrew Melodies*.

3

Away! we know that tears are vain,
 That Death nor heeds nor hears distress:
 Will this unteach us to complain?
 Or make one mourner weep the less?
 And thou—who tell'st me to forget—
 Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS!¹

Sun of the sleepless! melancholy star!
 Whose tearful beam glows tremulously far,
 That show'st the darkness thou canst not dispel,
 How like art thou to Joy remembered well!
 So gleams the past, the light of other days,
 Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays:
 A night-beam, Sorrow watcheth to behold,
 Distinct, but distant—clear—but, oh how cold!

STANZAS FOR MUSIC²

I

I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name,
 There is grief in the sound, there is guilt in the fame:
 But the tear which now burns on my cheek may impart
 The deep thoughts that dwell in that silence of heart.

2

Too brief for our passion, too long for our peace,
 Were those hours—can their joy or their bitterness cease?
 We repent, we abjure, we will break from our chain,—
 We will part, we will fly to—unite it again!

¹ Published among *Hebrew Melodies*.

² Written in 1815. Byron was intensely susceptible to music; though his musical tastes were not of a very high order.

3

Oh! thine be the gladness, and mine be the guilt!
 Forgive me, adored one!—forsake, if thou wilt;—
 But the heart which is thine shall expire undebased,
 And *man* shall not break it—whatever *thou* mayst.

4

And stern to the haughty, but humble to thee,
 This soul, in its bitterest blackness, shall be:
 And our days seem as swift, and our moments more sweet,
 With thee by my side, than with worlds at our feet.

5

One sigh of thy sorrow, one look of thy love,
 Shall turn me or fix, shall reward or reprove;
 And the heartless may wonder at all I resign—
 Thy lip shall reply, not to them, but to *mine*.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

I

There be none of Beauty's daughters
 With a magic like thee;
 And like music on the waters
 Is thy sweet voice to me:
 When, as if its sound were causing
 The charmed Ocean's pausing
 The waves lie still and gleaming,
 And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

2

And the Midnight Moon is weaving
 Her bright chain o'er the deep;
 Whose breast is gently heaving,
 As an infant's asleep:
 So the spirit bows before thee,
 To listen and adore thee;
 With a full but soft emotion,
 Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

A SKETCH¹

'Honest—honest Iago!
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.'

SHAKESPEARE

Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred,
Promoted thence to deck her mistress' head;
Next—for some gracious service unexpressed,
And from its wages only to be guessed—
Raised from the toilet to the table,—where
Her wondering betters wait behind her chair.
With eye unmoved, and forehead unabashed,
She dines from off the plate she lately washed.
Quick with the tale, and ready with the lie,
The genial confidante and general spy—
Who could, ye gods! her next employment guess—
An only infant's earliest governess!
She taught the child to read, and taught so well,
That she herself, by teaching, learned to spell.
An adept next in penmanship she grows,
As many a nameless slander deftly shows:
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know—but that high Soul secured the heart,
And panted for the truth it could not hear,
With longing breast and undeluded ear.
Foiled was perversion by that youthful mind,
Which Flattery fooled not, Baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not, nor Contagion soil,
Indulgence weaken, nor Example spoil,
Nor mastered Science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
Nor Genius swell, nor Beauty render vain,
Nor Envy ruffle to retaliate pain,
Nor Fortune change, Pride raise, nor Passion bow,
Nor Virtue teach austerity—till now.
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness—to forgive;

¹ Just before leaving England, Byron bade a characteristic *Farewell* to the unforgiving Annabella and fired off a parting broadside at his Mother-in-law's detested confidante, 'the respectable Mrs. Clermont.'

Too shocked at faults her soul can never know,
 She deems that all could be like her below:
 Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend—
 For Virtue pardons those she would amend.
 But to the theme, now laid aside too long,
 The baleful burthen of this honest song,
 Though all her former functions are no more,
 She rules the circle which she served before.
 If mothers—none know why—before her quake;
 If daughters dread her for the mother's sake;
 If early habits—those false links, which bind
 At times the loftiest to the meanest mind—
 Have given her power too deeply to instil
 The angry essence of her deadly will;
 If like a snake she steal within your walls,
 Till the black slime betray her as she crawls;
 If like a viper to the heart she wind,
 And leave the venom there she did not find;
 What marvel that this hag of hatred works
 Eternal evil latent as she lurks,
 To make a Pandemonium where she dwells,
 And reign the Hecate of domestic hells?
 Skilled by a touch to deepen Scandal's tints
 With all the kind mendacity of hints,
 While mingling truth with falsehood—sneers with smiles—
 A thread of candour with a web of wiles;
 A plain blunt show of briefly-spoken seeming,
 To hide her bloodless heart's soul-hardened scheming;
 A lip of lies; a face formed to conceal,
 And, without feeling, mock at all who feel:
 With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown,—
 A cheek of parchment, and an eye of stone.
 Mark, how the channels of her yellow blood
 Ooze to her skin, and stagnate there to mud,
 Cased like the centipede in saffron mail,
 Or darker greenness of the scorpion's scale—
 (For drawn from reptiles only may we trace
 Congenial colours in that soul or face)—
 Look on her features! and behold her mind
 As in a mirror of itself defined:
 Look on the picture! deem it not o'ercharged—
 There is no trait which might not be enlarged:

Yet true to 'Nature's journeymen,' who made
This monster when their mistress left off trade—
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or die.

Oh! wretch without a tear—without a thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought—
The time shall come, nor long remote, when thou
Shalt feel far more than thou inflictest now;
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.
May the strong curse of crushed affections light
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight!
And make thee in thy leprosy of mind
As loathsome to thyself as to mankind!
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate,
Black—as thy will for others would create:
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust.
Oh, may thy grave be sleepless as the bed,
The widowed couch of fire, that thou hast spread!
Then, when thou fain wouldst weary Heaven with prayer,
Look on thine earthly victims—and despair!
Down to the dust!—and, as thou rott'st away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay.
But for the love I bore, and still must bear,
To her thy malice from all ties would tear—
Thy name—thy human name—to every eye
The climax of all scorn should hang on high,
Exalted o'er thy less abhorred compeers—
And festering in the infamy of years.

THE DREAM¹

I

Our life is twofold: Sleep hath its own world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own world,

¹ This autobiographical poem (composed in July 1816) contains a sort of poetic résumé of Byron's emotional life—his unhappy youthful love-affair with Mary Chaworth and his own singularly unfortunate marriage.

And a wide realm of wild reality,
 And dreams in their development have breath,
 And tears, and tortures, and the touch of Joy;
 They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
 They take a weight from off our waking toils,
 They do divide our being; they become
 A portion of ourselves as of our time,
 And look like heralds of Eternity;
 They pass like spirits of the past,—they speak
 Like Sibyls of the future; they have power—
 The tyranny of pleasure and of pain;
 They make us what we were not—what they will,
 And shake us with the vision that's gone by,
 The dread of vanished shadows—Are they so?
 Is not the past all shadow—What are they?
 Creations of the mind?—The mind can make
 Substance, and people planets of its own
 With beings brighter than have been, and give
 A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.
 I would recall a vision which I dreamed
 Perchance in sleep—for, in itself, a thought,
 A slumbering thought, is capable of years,
 And curdles a long life into one hour.

2

I saw two beings in the hues of youth
 Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,
 Green and of mild declivity, the last
 As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such,
 Save that there was no sea to lave its base,
 But a most living landscape, and the wave
 Of woods and cornfields, and the abodes of men
 Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke
 Arising from such rustic roofs;—the hill
 Was crowned with a peculiar diadem
 Of trees, in circular array, so fixed,
 Not by the sport of nature, but of man:
 These two, a maiden and a youth, were there
 Gazing—the one on all that was beneath
 Fair as herself—but the Boy gazed on her;
 And both were young, and one was beautiful:

And both were young—yet not alike in youth.
 As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,
 The Maid was on the eve of Womanhood;
 The Boy had fewer summers, but his heart
 Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye
 There was but one beloved face on earth,
 And that was shining on him: he had looked
 Upon it till it could not pass away;
 He had no breath, no being, but in hers;
 She was his voice; he did not speak to her,
 But trembled on her words; she was his sight,
 For his eye followed hers, and saw with hers,
 Which coloured all his objects:—he had ceased
 To live within himself; she was his life,
 The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
 Which terminated all: upon a tone,
 A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,
 And his cheek change tempestuously—his heart
 Unknowing of its cause of agony.
 But she in these fond feelings had no share:
 Her sighs were not for him; to her he was
 Even as a brother—but no more; 'twas much,
 For brotherless she was, save in the name
 Her infant friendship had bestowed on him;
 Herself the solitary scion left
 Of a time-honoured race.—It was a name
 Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not—and why?
 Time taught him a deep answer—when she loved
 Another: even *now* she loved another,
 And on the summit of that hill she stood
 Looking afar if yet her lover's steed
 Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

3

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
 There was an ancient mansion, and before
 Its walls there was a steed caparisoned:
 Within an antique Oratory stood
 The Boy of whom I spake;—he was alone,
 And pale, and pacing to and fro: anon
 He sate him down, and seized a pen, and traced

Words which I could not guess of; then he leaned
 His bowed head on his hands, and shook as 'twere
 With a convulsion—then arose again,
 And with his teeth and quivering hands did tear
 What he had written, but he shed no tears.
 And he did calm himself, and fix his brow
 Into a kind of quiet: as he paused,
 The Lady of his love re-entered there;
 She was serene and smiling then, and yet
 She knew she was by him beloved—she knew,
 For quickly comes such knowledge, that his heart
 Was darkened with her shadow, and she saw
 That he was wretched, but she saw not all.
 He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp
 He took her hand; a moment o'er his face
 A tablet of unutterable thoughts
 Was traced, and then it faded, as it came;
 He dropped the hand he held, and with slow steps
 Retired, but not as bidding her adieu,
 For they did part with mutual smiles; he passed
 From out the massy gate of that old Hall,
 And mounting on his steed he went his way;
 And ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more.

4

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
 The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
 Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
 And his Soul drank their sunbeams: he was girt
 With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
 Himself like what he had been; on the sea
 And on the shore he was a wanderer;
 There was a mass of many images
 Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
 A part of all; and in the last he lay
 Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
 Couched among fallen columns, in the shade
 Of ruined walls that had survived the names
 Of those who reared them; by his sleeping side
 Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
 Were fastened near a fountain; and a man

Clad in a flowing garb did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumbered around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in Heaven.

5

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love was wed with One
Who did not love her better:—in her home,
A thousand leagues from his,—her native home,
She dwelt, begirt with growing Infancy,
Daughters and sons of Beauty,—but behold!
Upon her face there was the tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.
What could her grief be?—she had all she loved,
And he who had so loved her was not there
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,
Or ill-repressed affliction, her pure thoughts.
What could her grief be?—she had loved him not,
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,
Nor could he be a part of that which preyed
Upon her mind—a spectre of the past.

6

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was returned.—I saw him stand
Before an Altar—with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The Starlight of his Boyhood;—as he stood
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The self-same aspect, and the quivering shock
That in the antique Oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude; and then—
As in that hour—a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced,—and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke

The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reeled around him; he could see
Not that which was, nor that which should have been—
But the old mansion, and the accustomed hall,
And the remembered chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour,
And her who was his destiny, came back
And thrust themselves between him and the light:
What business had they there at such a time?

7

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love;—Oh! she was changed
As by the sickness of the soul; her mind
Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth; she was become
The Queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things;
And forms, impalpable and unperceived
Of others' sight, familiar were to hers.
And this the world calls frenzy; but the wise
Have a far deeper madness—and the glance
Of melancholy is a fearful gift;
What is it but the telescope of truth?
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,
And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real!

8

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,
The beings which surrounded him were gone,
Or were at war with him; he was a mark
For blight and desolation, compassed round
With Hatred and Contention; Pain was mixed
In all which was served up to him, until,
Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,

But were a kind of nutriment; he lived
Through that which had been death to many men,
And made him friends of mountains: with the stars
And the quick Spirit of the Universe
He held his dialogues; and they did teach
To him the magic of their mysteries;
To him the book of Night was opened wide,
And voices from the deep abyss revealed
A marvel and a secret—Be it so.

9

My dream was past; it had no further change.
It was of a strange order, that the doom
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out
Almost like a reality—the one
To end in madness—both in misery.

CHURCHILL'S GRAVE¹

A FACT LITERALLY RENDERED

I stood beside the grave of him who blazed
The Comet of a season, and I saw
The humblest of all sepulchres, and gazed
With not the less of sorrow and of awe
On that neglected turf and quiet stone,
With name no clearer than the names unknown,
Which lay unread around it; and I asked
The Gardener of that ground, why it might be
That for this plant strangers his memory tasked,
Through the thick deaths of half a century;
And thus he answered—'Well, I do not know
Why frequent travellers turn to pilgrims so;
He died before my day of Sextonship,
And I had not the digging of this grave.'
And is this all? I thought,—and do we rip
The veil of Immortality, and crave

¹ The 'fact literally rendered' in this poem was Byron's visit to the grave of Churchill the day before he set sail from England. Its references to his own existence—to the glory that he had enjoyed and to the disgrace that had overtaken him—need no amplification.

I know not what of honour and of light
 Through unborn ages, to endure this blight?
 So soon, and so successless? As I said,
 The Architect of all on which we tread,
 For Earth is but a tombstone, did essay
 To extricate remembrance from the clay,
 Whose minglings might confuse a Newton's thought,
 Were it not that all life must end in one,
 Of which we are but dreamers;—as he caught
 As 'twere the twilight of a former Sun,
 Thus spoke he,—'I believe the man of whom
 You wot, who lies in this selected tomb,
 Was a most famous writer in his day,
 And therefore travellers step from out their way
 To pay him honour,—and myself whate'er
 Your honour pleases:—then most pleased I shook
 From out my pocket's avaricious nook
 Some certain coins of silver, which as 'twere
 Perforce I gave this man, though I could spare
 So much but inconveniently:—Ye smile,
 I see ye, ye profane ones! all the while,
 Because my homely phrase the truth would tell.
 You are the fools, not I—for I did dwell
 With a deep thought, and with a softened eye,
 On that old Sexton's natural homily,
 In which there was Obscurity and Fame,—
 The Glory and the Nothing of a Name.

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA¹

I

My Sister! my sweet Sister! if a name
 Dearer and purer were, it should be thine.
 Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
 No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:
 Go where I will, to me thou art the same—
 A loved regret which I would not resign.

¹ Though, like so many of Byron's productions, extremely unequal, the *Epistle to Augusta* has a grave and tragic beauty. Byron's mention of his 'heritage of storms' and 'our grandsire's fate' is explained by the legend that surrounded Admiral the Hon. John Byron, known in the navy as 'Foulweather Jack,' since a hurricane sprang up whenever he sailed.

There yet are two things in my destiny,—
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

2

The first were nothing—had I still the last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them less.
A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore,—
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

3

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlooked or unforeseen,
I have sustained my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

4

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marred
The gift,—a fate, or will, that walked astray;
And I at times have found the struggle hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay;
But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

5

Kingdoms and Empires in my little day;
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have rolled
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away:
Something—I know not what—does still uphold

A spirit of slight patience;—not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase Pain.

6

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me—or, perhaps, a cold despair
Brought on when ills habitually recur,—
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air,
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear,)
Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

7

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt,
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love—but none like thee.

8

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create
A fund for contemplation;—to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire:
Here to be lonely is not desolate,
For much I view which I could most desire,
And, above all, a Lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

9

Oh that thou wert but with me!—but I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude which I have vaunted so
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may show;—
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my altered eye.

IO

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
 By the old Hall which may be mine no more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
 The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:
 Sad havoc Time must with my memory make,
 Ere that or thou can fade these eyes before;
 Though, like all things which I have loved, they are
 Resigned for ever, or divided far.

II

The world is all before me; I but ask
 Of Nature that with which she will comply—
 It is but in her Summer's sun to bask,
 To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
 To see her gentle face without a mask,
 And never gaze on it with apathy.
 She was my early friend, and now shall be
 My sister—till I look again on thee.

12

I can reduce all feelings but this one,—
 And that I would not;—for at length I see
 Such scenes as those wherein my life begun—
 The earliest—even the only paths for me—
 Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
 I had been better than I now can be;
 The Passions which have torn me would have slept—
 I had not suffered, and *thou* hadst not wept.

13

With false Ambition what had I to do?
 Little with Love, and least of all with Fame;
 And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,
 And made me all which they can make—a Name.
 Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
 Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
 But all is over—I am one the more
 To baffled millions which have gone before.

14

And for the future, this world's future may
 From me demand but little of my care:
 I have outlived myself by many a day,
 Having survived so many things that were;
 My years have been no slumber, but the prey
 Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
 Of life which might have filled a century,
 Before its fourth in time had passed me by.

15

And for the remnant which may be to come
 I am content; and for the past I feel
 Not thankless,—for within the crowded sum
 Of struggles, Happiness at times would steal,
 And, for the present, I would not benumb
 My feelings farther.—Nor shall I conceal
 That with all this I still can look around,
 And worship Nature with a thought profound.

16

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart
 I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
 We were and are—I am, even as thou art—
 Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
 It is the same, together or apart—
 From Life's commencement to its slow decline
 We are entwined—let Death come slow or fast,
 The tie which bound the first endures the last!

SO WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING¹

I

So we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

2

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

3

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon.

STANZAS TO THE PO²

I

River, that rollest by the ancient walls,
Where dwells the Lady of my love, when she
Walks by thy brink, and there, perchance, recalls
A faint and fleeting memory of me:

2

What if thy deep and ample stream should be
A mirror of my heart, where she may read
The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed!

¹ Byron never came nearer to pure poetry than in this little poem, written during the aftermath of the Venetian Carnival in 1817

² Written in the Spring of 1819, these lines are addressed to Teresa Guiccioli and reflect the calm flow of a quasi-domestic love affair.

3

What do I say—a mirror of my heart?
 Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and strong?
 Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
 And such as thou art were my passions long.

4

Time may have somewhat tamed them,—not for ever;
 Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for aye
 Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
 Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk away:

5

But left long wrecks behind, and now again,
 Borne in our old unchanged career, we move;
 Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main,
 And I—to loving *one* I should not love.

6

The current I behold will sweep beneath
 Her native walls, and murmur at her feet;
 Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe
 The twilight air, unharmed by summer's heat.

7

She will look on thee,—I have looked on thee,
 Full of that thought: and, from that moment, ne'er
 Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see,
 Without the inseparable sigh for her!

8

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream,—
 Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on now:
 Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
 That happy wave repass me in its flow!

9

The wave that bears my tears returns no more:
Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep?—
Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore,
I by thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.

10

But that which keepeth us apart is not
Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,
But the distraction of a various lot,
As various as the climates of our birth.

11

A stranger loves the Lady of the land,
Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood
Is all meridian, as if never fanned
By the black wind that chills the polar flood.

12

My blood is all meridian; were it not,
I had not left my clime, nor should I be,
In spite of tortures, ne'er to be forgot,
A slave again of love,—at least of thee.

13

'Tis vain to struggle—let me perish young—
Live as I lived, and love as I have loved;
To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,
And then, at least, my heart can ne'er be moved.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR¹

I

'T is time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

2

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of Love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

3

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some Volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

4

The hope, the fear, the zealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

5

But 't is not *thus*—and 't is not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*
Where Glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

6

The Sword, the Banner, and the Field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

¹ Byron's last poem, written at Missolonghi on January 22nd, 1824. Those who are familiar with the background of his life in Greece may find matter for speculation in the eighth verse.

7

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

8

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of Beauty be.

9

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why* live?
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the Field, and give
Away thy breath!

10

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy Rest.

Prose

The literary merits of Byron's prose-writings are discussed in the editor's Biographical Introduction. They are represented here by a selection of letters, the earliest dated August 26th, 1806, the latest August 12th, 1819, and by two journals, *Extracts from a Diary*, kept at Ravenna during January and February 1821, and a fascinating sheaf of *Detached Thoughts*. In his letters, journals and fragmentary jottings, Byron was able to produce an astonishingly vivid self-portrait. Many admirable letters have perforce been excluded; but his diaries, journals and autobiographical and reflective memoranda have been reprinted in full.

JOURNAL, BEGUN NOVEMBER 14, 1813¹

If this had been begun ten years ago, and faithfully kept!!!—heigho! there are too many things I wish never to have remembered, as it is. Well,—I have had my share of what are called the pleasures of this life, and have seen more of the European and Asiatic world than I have made a good use of. They say 'Virtue is its own reward,'—it certainly should be paid well for its trouble. At five-and-twenty, when the better part of life is over, one should be *something*;—and what am I? nothing but five-and-twenty—and the odd months. What have I seen? the same man all over the world,—ay, and woman too. Give *me* a Mussulman who never asks questions, and a she of the same race who saves one the trouble of putting them. But for this same plague—yellow fever—and Newstead delay, I should have been by

¹ Byron's journals need very little annotation. They are self-explanatory and, according to the modern taste, with their easy flow and amusing mixture of irony, cynicism and sentiment, some of the best things he ever wrote. Here we find a fluent day-to-day chronicle of thoughts, fancies and adventures. We notice an increasing restlessness and the gradual drift towards marriage which culminated in his disastrous alliance with Annabella Milbanke at the beginning of January, 1815. Meanwhile, he had completed *The Bride of Abydos*—otherwise called *Zuleska*—a memorial of an episode in his past life that (as he told Tom Moore) he hardly liked to think of. One of the greatest charms of this—his earliest—journal is that it shows us Byron in so many different aspects at the same time. He is tragic, serious, deeply introspective—yet frivolity is perpetually breaking through!

this time a second time close to the Euxine. If I can overcome the last, I don't so much mind your pestilence; and, at any rate, the spring shall see me there,—provided I neither marry myself, nor unmarry any one else in the interval. I wish one was—I don't know what I wish. It is odd I never set myself seriously to wishing without attaining it—and repenting. I begin to believe with the good old Magi, that one should only pray for the nation, and not for the individual;—but, on my principle, this would not be very patriotic.

No more reflections.—Let me see—last night I finished 'Zuleika,' my second Turkish Tale. I believe the composition of it kept me alive—for it was written to drive my thoughts from the recollection of—

Dear sacred name, rest ever unreveal'd.

At least, even here, my hand would tremble to write it. This afternoon I have burnt the scenes of my commenced comedy. I have some idea of expectorating a romance, or rather a tale in prose;—but what romance could equal the events—

*quæque ipse . . . vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui.*

To-day Henry Byron called on me with my little cousin Eliza. She will grow up a beauty and a plague; but, in the mean time, it is the prettiest child! dark eyes and eyelashes, black and long as the wing of a raven. I think she is prettier even than my niece, Georgina,—yet I don't like to think so neither; and though older, she is not so clever.

Dallas called before I was up, so we did not meet. Lewis, too,—who seems out of humour with every thing. What can be the matter? he is not married—has he lost his own mistress, or any other person's wife? Hodgson, too, came. He is going to be married, and he is the kind of man who will be the happier. He has talent, cheerfulness, every thing that can make him a pleasing companion; and his intended is handsome and young, and all that. But I never see any one much improved by matrimony. All my coupled contemporaries are bald and discontented. W[ordsworth] and S[outhey] have both lost their hair and good humour; and the last of the two had a good deal to lose. But it don't much signify what falls off a man's temples in that state.

Mem. I must get a toy to-morrow for Eliza, and send the device for the seals of myself and — Mem. too, to call on the Stael and Lady Holland to-morrow, and on —, who has advised me (without

seeing it, by the by) not to publish 'Zuleika;' I believe he is right, but experience might have taught him that not to print is *physically* impossible. No one has seen it but Hodgson and Mr. Gifford. I never in my life read a composition, save to Hodgson, as he pays me in kind. It is a horrible thing to do too frequently;—better print, and they who like may read, and if they don't like, you have the satisfaction of knowing that they have, at least, *purchased* the right of saying so.

I have declined presenting the Debtors' Petition, being sick of parliamentary mummeries. I have spoken thrice; but I doubt my ever becoming an orator. My first was liked; the second and third—I don't know whether they succeeded or not. I have never yet set to it *con amore*;—one must have some excuse to one's self for laziness, or inability, or both, and this is mine. 'Company, villanous company, hath been the spoil of me;'—and then, I 'have drunk medicines,' not to make me love others, but certainly enough to hate myself.

Two nights ago I saw the tigers sup at Exeter 'Change. Except Veli Pacha's lion in the Morea,—who followed the Arab keeper like a dog,—the fondness of the hyæna for her keeper amused me most. Such a conversazione!—There was a 'hippopotamus,' like Lord Liverpool in the face; and the 'Ursine Sloth' had the very voice and manner of my valet—but the tiger talked too much. The elephant took and gave me my money again—took off my hat—opened a door—*trunked* a whip—and behaved so well, that I wish he was my butler. The handsomest animal on earth is one of the panthers; but the poor antelopes were dead. I should hate to see one *here*:—the sight of the *camel* made me pine again for Asia Minor. *Oh quando te aspiciam?*

November 16

Went last night with Lewis to see the first of *Antony and Cleopatra*. It was admirably got up, and well acted—a salad of Shakspeare and Dryden. Cleopatra strikes me as the epitome of her sex—fond, lively, sad, tender, teasing, humble, haughty, beautiful, the devil!—coquetish to the last, as well with the 'asp' as with Antony. After doing all she can to persuade him that—but why do they abuse him for cutting off that poltroon Cicero's head? Did not Tully tell Brutus it was a pity to have spared Antony? and did he not speak the *Philippics*? and are not '*words things*?' and such '*words*' very pestilent '*things*' too? If he had had a hundred heads, they deserved (from Antony) a rostrum (his was stuck up there) apiece—though, after all, he might as well have pardoned him, for the credit of the thing. But to resume—Cleopatra, after securing him, says, 'yet go—it is your interest,'

etc.—how like the sex! and the questions about Octavia—it is woman all over.

To-day received Lord Jersey's invitation to Middleton—to travel sixty miles to meet Madame De Staël! I once travelled three thousand to get among silent people; and this same lady writes octavos, and *talks folios*. I have read her books—like most of them, and delight in the last; so I won't hear it, as well as read.

Read Burns to-day. What would he have been, if a patrician? We should have had more polish—less force—just as much verse, but no immortality—a divorce and a duel or two, the which had he survived, as his potations must have been less spirituous, he might have lived as long as Sheridan, and outlived as much as poor Brinsley. What a wreck is that man! and all from bad pilotage; for no one had ever better gales, though now and then a little too squally. Poor dear Sherry! I shall never forget the day he and Rogers and Moore and I passed together; when *he* talked, and *we* listened, without one yawn, from six till one in the morning.

Got my seals — Have again forgot a plaything for *ma petite cousine* Eliza; but I must send for it to-morrow. I hope Harry will bring her to me. I sent Lord Holland the proofs of the last *Giaour*, and *The Bride of Abydos*. He won't like the latter, and I don't think that I shall long. It was written in four nights to distract my dreams from — Were it not thus, it had never been composed; and had I not done something at that time, I must have gone mad, by eating my own heart,—bitter diet;—Hodgson likes it better than *The Giaour*, but nobody else will,—and he never liked the Fragment. I am sure, had it not been for Murray, *that* would never have been published, though the circumstances which are the ground-work make it — heigh-ho!

To-night I saw both the sisters of —; my God! the youngest so like! I thought I should have sprung across the house, and am so glad no one was with me in Lady H.'s box. I hate those likenesses—the mock-bird, but not the nightingale—so like as to remind, so different as to be painful. One quarrels equally with the points of resemblance and of distinction.

Nov. 17

No letter from —; but I must not complain. The respectable Job says, 'Why should a *living man* complain?' I really don't know, except it be that a *dead man* can't; and he, the said patriarch, *did* complain, nevertheless, till his friends were tired and his wife

recommended that pious prologue, 'Curse—and die;' the only time, I suppose, when but little relief is to be found in swearing. I have had a most kind letter from Lord Holland on *The Bride of Abydos*, which he likes, and so does Lady H. This is very good-natured in both, from whom I don't deserve any quarter. Yet I *did* think, at the time, that my cause of enmity proceeded from Holland House, and am glad I was wrong, and wish I had not been in such a hurry with that confounded satire, of which I would suppress even the memory;—but people, now they can't get it, make a fuss, I verily believe, out of contradiction.

George Ellis and Murray have been talking something about Scott and me, George *pro Scoto*,—and very right too. If they want to depose him, I only wish they would not set me up as a competitor. Even if I had my choice, I would rather be the Earl of Warwick than all the *kings* he ever made! Jeffrey and Gifford I take to be the monarch-makers in poetry and prose. The *British Critic*, in their Rokeby Review, have presupposed a comparison which I am sure my friends never thought of, and W. Scott's subjects are injudicious in descending to. I like the man—and admire his works to what Mr. Braham calls *Entusymusy*. All such stuff can only vex him, and do me no good. Many hate his politics—(I hate all politics); and, here, a man's politics are like the Greek *soul*—an *ειδωλον*, besides God knows what *other soul*; but their estimate of the two generally go together.

Harry has not brought *ma petite cousine*. I want us to go to the play together;—she has been but once. Another short note from Jersey, inviting Rogers and me on the 23d. I must see my agent to-night. I wonder when that Newstead business will be finished. It cost me more than words to part with it—and to *have* parted with it! What matters it what I do? or what becomes of me?—but let me remember Job's saying, and console myself with being 'a living man.'

I wish I could settle to reading again,—my life is monotonous, and yet desultory. I take up books, and fling them down again. I began a comedy, and burnt it because the scene ran into *reality*;—a novel, for the same reason. In rhyme, I can keep more away from facts; but the thought always runs through, through . . . yes, yes, through. I have had a letter from Lady Melbourne—the best friend I ever had in my life, and the cleverest of women.

Not a word from ——. Have they set out from ——? or has my last precious epistle fallen into the lion's jaws? If so—and this silence looks suspicious—I must clap on my 'musty morion' and 'hold out my iron.' I am out of practice—but I won't begin again at Manton's now. Besides, I would not return his shot. I was once a famous wafer-

splitter; but then the bullies of society made it necessary. Ever since I began to feel that I had a bad cause to support, I have left off the exercise.

What strange tidings from that Anakim of anarchy—Buonaparte! Ever since I defended my bust of him at Harrow against the rascally time-servers, when the war broke out in 1803, he has been a *Héros de Roman* of mine—on the Continent; I don't want him here. But I don't like those same flights—leaving of armies, etc. etc. I am sure when I fought for his bust at school, I did not think he would run away from himself. But I should not wonder if he banged them yet. To be beat by men would be something; but by three stupid, legitimate-old-dynasty boobies of regular-bred sovereigns—O-hone-a-rie!—O-hone-a-rie! It must be, as Cobbett says, his marriage with the thick-lipped and thick-headed *Autrichienne* brood. He had better have kept to her who was kept by Barras. I never knew any good come of your young wife, and legal espousals, to any but your 'sober-blooded boy' who 'eats fish' and drinketh 'no sack.' Had he not the whole opera? all Paris? all France? But a mistress is just as perplexing—that is, *one*—two or more are manageable by division.

I have begun, or had begun, a song, and flung it into the fire. It was in remembrance of Mary Duff, my first of flames, before most people begin to burn. I wonder what the devil is the matter with me! I can do nothing, and—fortunately there is nothing to do. It has lately been in my power to make two persons (and their connections) comfortable, *pro tempore*, and one happy, *ex tempore*,—I rejoice in the last particularly, as it is an excellent man. I wish there had been more inconvenience and less gratification to my self-love in it, for then there had been more merit. We are all selfish—and I believe, ye gods of Epicurus! I believe in Rochefoucault about *men*, and in Lucretius (not Busby's translation) about yourselves. Your bard has made you very *nonchalant* and blest; but as he has excused *us* from damnation, I don't envy you your blessedness *much*—a little, to be sure. I remember, last year, — said to me, at —, 'Have we not passed our last month like the gods of Lucretius?' And so we had. She is an adept in the text of the original (which I like too); and when that booby Bus. sent his translating prospectus, she subscribed. But, the devil prompting him to add a specimen, she transmitted him a subsequent answer, saying, that 'after perusing it, her conscience would not permit her to allow her name to remain on the list of sub-scribblers.' Last night, at Lord H.'s—Mackintosh, the Ossulstones, Puységur, etc. there—I was trying to recollect a quotation (as I think) of Stael's, from some Teutonic sophist about architecture. 'Architecture,' says

this Macorónico Tedesco, 'reminds me of frozen music.' It is somewhere—but where?—the demon of perplexity must know and won't tell. I asked M., and he said it was not in her: but Puysegur said it must be *hers*, it was so *like*. H. laughed, as he does at all *De l'Allemagne*,—in which, however, I think he goes a little too far. B., I hear, condemns it too. But there are fine passages;—and, after all, what is a work—any—or every work—but a desert with fountains, and, perhaps, a grove or two, every day's journey? To be sure, in Madame, what we often mistake, and 'pant for,' as the 'cooling stream,' turns out to be the '*mirage*' (*criticé verbiage*); but we do, at last, get to something like the temple of Jove Ammon, and then the waste we have passed is only remembered to gladden the contrast.

Called on C—, to explain—She is very beautiful, to my taste, at least; for on coming home from abroad, I recollect being unable to look at any woman but her—they were so fair, and unmeaning, and *blonde*. The darkness and regularity of her features reminded me of my 'Jannat al Aden.' But this impression wore off; and now I can look at a fair woman, without longing for a Hourî. She was very good-tempered, and every thing was explained.

To-day, great news—'the Dutch have taken Holland,'—which I suppose, will be succeeded by the actual explosion of the Thames. Five provinces have declared for young Stadt, and there will be inundation, conflagration, constupration, consternation, and every sort of nation and nations, fighting away, up to their knees, in the damnable quags of this will-o'-the-wisp abode of Boors. It is said Bernadotte is amongst them, too; and, as Orange will be there soon, they will have (Crown) Prince Stork and King Log in their Loggery at the same time. Two to one on the new dynasty!

Mr. Murray has offered me one thousand guineas for *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*. I won't—it is too much, though I am strongly tempted, merely for the *say* of it. No bad price for a fortnight's (a week each) what?—the gods know—it was intended to be called poetry.

I have dined regularly to-day, for the first time since Sunday last—this being Sabbath, too. All the rest, tea and dry biscuits—*six per diem*. I wish to God I had not dined now!—It kills me with heaviness, stupor, and horrible dreams;—and yet it was but a pint of bucellas, and fish. Meat I never touch,—nor much vegetable diet. I wish I were in the country, to take exercise,—instead of being obliged to *cool* by abstinence, in lieu of it. I should not so much mind a little accession of flesh,—my bones can well bear it. But the worst is, the devil always came with it,—till I starved him out,—and I will *not*

be the slave of *any* appetite. If I do err, it shall be my heart, at least, that heralds the way. Oh, my head—how it aches? —the horrors of digestion! I wonder how Buonaparte's dinner agrees with him?

Mem. I must write to-morrow to 'Master Shallow, who owes me a thousand pounds,' and seems, in his letter, afraid I should ask him for it;—as if I would!—I don't want it (just now, at least,) to begin with; and though I have often wanted that sum, I never asked for the repayment of 10*l.* in my life—from a friend. His bond is not due this year, and I told him when it was, I should not enforce it. How often must he make me say the same thing?

I am wrong—I did once ask — to repay me. But it was under circumstances that excused me *to him*, and would to any one. I took no interest, nor required security. He paid me soon,—at least, his *padre*. My head! I believe it was given me to ache with. Good even.

Nov. 22, 1813

'Orange Boven!' So the bees have expelled the bear that broke open their hive. Well,—if we are to have new De Witts and De Ruyters, God speed the little republic! I should like to see the Hague and the village of Brock, where they have such primitive habits. Yet, I don't know,—their canals would cut a poor figure by the memory of the Bosphorus; and the Zuyder Zee look awkwardly after 'Ak-Denizi.' No matter,—the bluff burghers, puffing freedom out of their short tobacco-pipes, might be worth seeing; though I prefer a cigar or a hooka, with the rose-leaf mixed with the milder herb of the Levant. I don't know what liberty means,—never having seen it,—but wealth is power all over the world; and as a shilling performs the duty of a pound (besides sun and sky and beauty for nothing) in the East,—*that* is the country. How I envy Herodes Atticus!—more than Pomponius. And yet a little *tumult*, now and then, is an agreeable quickener of sensation; such as a revolution, a battle, or an *aventure* of any lively description. I think I rather would have been Bonneval, Ripperda, Alberoni, Hayreddin, or Horuc Barbarossa, or even Wortley Montague, than Mahomet himself.

Rogers will be in town soon?—the 23d is fixed for our Middleton visit. Shall I go? umph!—In this island, where one can't ride out without overtaking the sea, it don't much matter where one goes.

I remember the effect of the *first Edinburgh Review* on me. I heard of it six weeks before,—read it the day of its denunciation,—dined and drank three bottles of claret, (with S. B. Davies, I think,) neither ate nor slept the less, but, nevertheless, was not easy till I had vented

my wrath and my rhyme, in the same pages, against every thing and every body. Like George, in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, 'the fate of my paradoxes' would allow me to perceive no merit in another. I remembered only the maxim of my boxing-master, which, in my youth, was found useful in all general riots,—'Whoever is not for you is against you—*mill* away right and left,' and so I did;—like Ishmael, my hand was against all men, and all men's anent me. I did wonder, to be sure, at my own success—

And marvels so much wit is all his own,

as Hobhouse sarcastically says of somebody (not unlikely myself, as we are old friends);—but were it to come over again, I would *not*. I have since redde the cause of my couplets, and it is not adequate to the effect. C—— told me that it was believed I alluded to poor Lord Carlisle's nervous disorder in one of the lines. I thank Heaven I did not know it—and would not, could not, if I had. I must naturally be the last person to be pointed on defects or maladies.

Rogers is silent,—and, it is said, severe. When he does talk, he talks well; and, on all subjects of taste, his delicacy of expression is pure as his poetry. If you enter his house—his drawing-room—his library—you of yourself say, this is not the dwelling of a common mind. There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor. But this very delicacy must be the misery of his existence. Oh the jarrings his disposition must have encountered through life!

Southey, I have not seen much of. His appearance is *Epic*; and he is the only existing man of letters. All the others have some pursuit annexed to their authorship. His manners are mild, but not those of a man of the world, and his talents of the first order. His prose is perfect. Of his poetry there are various opinions: there is, perhaps, too much of it for the present generation;—posterity will probably select. He has *passages* equal to any thing. At present, he has a *party*, but no *public*—except for his prose writings. The life of Nelson is beautiful.

Sotheby is a *Littérateur*, the Oracle of the Coteries, of the —s, Lydia White (Sydney Smith's 'Tory Virgin'), Mrs. Wilmot (she, at least, is a swan, and might frequent a purer stream,) Lady Beaumont, and all the Blues, with Lady Charlemont at their head—but I say nothing of *her*—'look in her face and you forget them all,' and every thing else. Oh that face!—by *te*, *Diva potens Cypri*, I would, to be beloved by that woman, build and burn another Troy.

Moore has a peculiarity of talent, or rather talents,—poetry, music,

voice, all his own; and an expression in each, which never was, nor will be, possessed by another. But he is capable of still higher flights in poetry. By the by, what humour, what—every thing, in the *Posi-Bag*! There is nothing Moore may not do, if he will but seriously set about it. In society, he is gentlemanly, gentle, and, altogether, more pleasing than any individual with whom I am acquainted. For his honour, principle, and independence, his conduct to — speaks ‘trumpet-tongued.’ He has but one fault—and that one I daily regret—he is not *here*.

Nov. 23

Ward—I like Ward. By Mahomet! I begin to think I like every body;—a disposition not to be encouraged;—a sort of social gluttony that swallows every thing set before it. But I like Ward. He is *piquant*; and, in my opinion, will stand *very* high in the House, and every where else, if he applies *regularly*. By the by, I dine with him to-morrow, which may have some influence on my opinion. It is as well not to trust one’s gratitude *after* dinner. I have heard many a host libelled by his guests, with his burgundy yet reeking on their rascally lips.

I have taken Lord Salisbury’s box at Covent Garden for the season; and now I must go and prepare to join Lady Holland and party, in theirs, at Drury Lane, *questa sera*.

Holland doesn’t think the man is *Junius*; but that the yet unpublished journal throws great light on the obscurities of that part of George the Second’s reign.—What is this to George the Third’s? I don’t know what to think. Why should Junius be yet dead? If suddenly apoplexed, would he rest in his grave without sending his *εἰδωλον* to shout in the ears of posterity, ‘Junius was X. Y. Z., Esq., buried in the parish of —. Repair his monument, ye churchwardens! Print a new edition of his Letters, ye booksellers!’ Impossible,—the man must be alive, and will never die without the disclosure. I like him;—he was a good hater.

Came home unwell and went to bed,—not so sleepy as might be desirable.

Tuesday morning

I awoke from a dream!—well! and have not others dreamed?—Such a dream!—but she did not overtake me. I wish the dead would rest, however. Ugh! how my blood chilled,—and I could not wake—and—and—heigho!

Shadows to-night

*Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
Than could the substance of ten thousand —s,
Arm'd all in proof, and led by shallow —.*

I do not like this dream,—I hate its 'foregone conclusion.' And am I to be shaken by shadows? Ay, when they remind us of—no matter—but, if I dream thus again, I will try whether *all* sleep has the like visions. Since I rose, I've been in considerable bodily pain also; but it is gone, and now, like Lord Ogleby, I am wound up for the day.

A note from Mountnorris—I dine with Ward;—Canning is to be there, Frere and Sharpe, perhaps Gifford. I am to be one of 'the five' (or rather six), as Lady — said a little sneeringly yesterday. They are all good to meet, particularly Canning, and—Ward, when he likes. I wish I may be well enough to listen to these intellectuals.

No letters to-day;—so much the better,—there are no answers. I must not dream again;—it spoils even reality. I will go out of doors, and see what the fog will do for me. Jackson has been here: the boxing world much as usual;—but the club increases. I shall dine at Crib's to-morrow. I like energy—even animal energy—of all kinds; and I have need of both mental and corporeal. I have not dined out, nor, indeed *at all*, lately: have heard no music—have seen nobody. Now for a *plunge*—high life and low life. *Amant alterna Camæna!*

I have burnt my *Roman*—as I did the first scenes and sketch of my comedy—and, for aught I see, the pleasure of burning is quite as great as that of printing. These two last would not have done. I ran into *realities* more than ever; and some would have been recognised and others guessed at.

Redde the *Ruminator*—a collection of Essays, by a strange, but able, old man (Sir Egerton Brydges), and a half-wild young one, author of a poem on the Highlands, called *Childe Alarique*. The word 'sensibility' (always my aversion) occurs a thousand times in these Essays; and, it seems, is to be an excuse for all kinds of discontent. This young man can know nothing of life; and, if he cherishes the disposition which runs through his papers, will become useless, and, perhaps, not even a poet, after all, which he seems determined to be. God help him! no one should be a rhymers who could be any thing better. And this is what annoys one, to see Scott and Moore, and Campbell and Rogers, who might have all been agents and leaders, now mere spectators. For, though they may have other ostensible avocations, these last are reduced to a secondary consideration. —,

too, frittering away his time among dowagers and unmarried girls. If it advanced any *serious* affair, it were some excuse; but, with the unmarried, that is a hazardous speculation, and tiresome enough, too; and, with the veterans, it is not much worth trying, unless, perhaps, one in a thousand.

If I had any views in this country, they would probably be parliamentary. But I have no ambition; at least, if any, it would be *aut Cæsar aut nihil*. My hopes are limited to the arrangement of my affairs, and settling either in Italy or the East (rather the last), and drinking deep of the languages and literature of both. Past events have unnerved me; and all I can now do is to make life an amusement, and look on while others play. After all, even the highest game of crowns and sceptres, what is it? *Vide* Napoleon's last twelvemonth. It has completely upset my system of fatalism. I thought, if crushed, he would have fallen, when *fractus illabitur orbis*, and not have been pared away to gradual insignificance; that all this was not a mere *jeu* of the gods, but a prelude to greater changes and mightier events. But men never advance beyond a certain point; and here we are, retrograding, to the dull, stupid old system,—balance of Europe—poising straws upon kings' noses, instead of wringing them off! Give me a republic, or a despotism of one, rather than the mixed government of one, two, three. A republic!—look in the history of the Earth—Rome, Greece, Venice, France, Holland, America, our short (*ehou!*) Commonwealth, and compare it with what they did under masters. The Asiatics are not qualified to be republicans, but they have the liberty of demolishing despots, which is the next thing to it. To be the first man—not the Dictator—not the Sylla, but the Washington or the Aristides—the leader in talent and truth—is next to the Divinity! Franklin, Penn, and, next to these, either Brutus or Cassius—even Mirabeau—or St. Just. I shall never be any thing, or rather always be nothing. The most I can hope is, that some will say, 'He might, perhaps, if he would.'

12, midnight

Here are two confounded proofs from the printer. I have looked at the one, but for the soul of me, I can't look over that *Giaour* again,—at least, just now, and at this hour—and yet there is no moon.

Ward talks of going to Holland, and we have partly discussed an *ensemble* expedition. It must be in ten days, if at all, if we wish to be in at the Revolution. And why not? — is distant, and will be at —, still more distant, till spring. No one else, except Augusta, cares for me; no ties—no trammels—*andiamo dunque—se torniamo*,

bene—se non, ch' importa? Old William of Orange talked of dying in 'the last ditch' of his dingy country. It is lucky I can swim, or I suppose I should not well weather the first. But let us see. I have heard hyenas and jackalls in the ruins of Asia; and bull-frogs in the marshes; besides wolves and angry Mussulmans. Now, I should like to listen to the shout of a free Dutchman.

Alla! Viva! For ever! Hourra! Huzza!—which is the most rational or musical of these cries? 'Orange Boven,' according to the *Morning Post*.

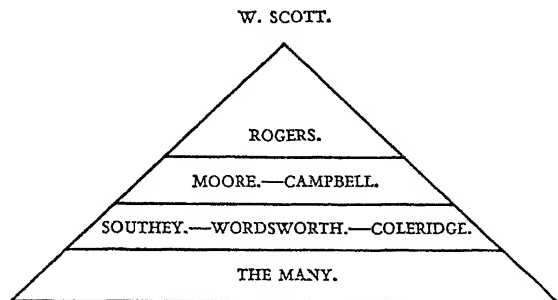
Wednesday, 24

No dreams last night of the dead, nor the living; so—I am 'firm as the marble, founded as the rock,' till the next earthquake.

Ward's dinner went off well. There was not a disagreeable person there—unless I offended any body, which I am sure I could not by contradiction, for I said little, and opposed nothing. Sharpe (a man of elegant mind, and who has lived much with the best—Fox, Horne Tooke, Windham, Fitzpatrick, and all the agitators of other times and tongues,) told us the particulars of his last interview with Windham, a few days before the fatal operation which sent 'that gallant spirit to aspire the skies.' Windham,—the first in one department of oratory and talent, whose only fault was his refinement beyond the intellect of half his hearers,—Windham, half his life an active participator in the events of the earth, and one of those who governed nations,—*he* regretted,—and dwelt much on that regret, that 'he had not entirely devoted himself to literature and science!!!' His mind certainly would have carried him to eminence there, as elsewhere;—but I cannot comprehend what debility of that mind could suggest such a wish. I, who had heard him, cannot regret any thing but that I shall never hear him again. What! would he have been a plodder? a metaphysician?—perhaps a rhymers? a scribbler? Such an exchange must have been suggested by illness. But he is gone and Time 'shall not look upon his like again.'

I am tremendously in arrear with my letters,—except to —, and to her my thoughts overpower me:—my words never compass them. To Lady Melbourne I write with most pleasure—and her answers, so sensible, so *tactique*—I never met with half her talent. If she had been a few years younger, what a fool she would have made of me, had she thought it worth her while,—and I should have lost a valuable and most agreeable *friend*. Mem. a mistress never is nor can be a friend. While you agree, you are lovers; and, when it is over, any thing but friends.

I have not answered W. Scott's last letter,—but I will. I regret to hear from others, that he has lately been unfortunate in pecuniary involvements. He is undoubtedly the Monarch of Parnassus, and the most *English* of bards. I should place Rogers next in the living list (I value him more as the last of the *best* school)—Moore and Campbell both *third*—Southey and Wordsworth and Coleridge—the rest, οἱ πολλοί—thus:—



There is a triangular *Gradus ad Parnassum*!—the names are too numerous for the base of the triangle. Poor Thurlow has gone wild about the poetry of Queen Bess's reign—*c'est dommage*. I have ranked the names upon my triangle more upon what I believe popular opinion, than any decided opinion of my own. For, to me, some of Moore's last *Erin* sparks—'As a beam o'er the face of the waters'—'When he who adores thee'—'Oh blame not'—and 'Oh breathe not his name'—are worth all the Epics that ever were composed.

Rogers thinks the *Quarterly* will attack me next. Let them. I have been 'peppered so highly' in my time, *both* ways, that it must be cayenne or aloes to make me taste. I can sincerely say, that I am not very much alive *now* to criticism. But—in tracing this—I rather believe that it proceeds from my not attaching that importance to authorship which many do, and which, when young, I did also. 'One gets tired of every thing, my angel,' says Valmont. The 'angels' are the only things of which I am not a little sick—but I do think the preference of *writers* to *agents*—the mighty stir made about scribbling and scribes, by themselves and others—a sign of effeminacy, degeneracy, and weakness. Who would write, who had any thing better to do? 'Action—action—action'—said Demosthenes: 'Actions—actions,' I say, and not writing,—least of all, rhyme. Look at the

querulous and monotonous lives of the 'genus;'—except Cervantes, Tasso, Dante, Ariosto, Kleist (who were brave and active citizens), Æschylus, Sophocles, and some other of the antiques also—what a worthless, idle brood it is!

12, *Mezza Notte*

Just returned from dinner with Jackson (the Emperor of Pugilism) and another of the select, at Crib's, the champion's. I drank more than I like, and have brought away some three bottles of very fair claret—for I have no headach. We had Tom Crib up after dinner;—very facetious, though somewhat prolix. He don't like his situation—wants to fight again—pray Pollux (or Castor, if he was the *miller*) he may! Tom has been a sailor—a coal-heaver—and some other genteel profession, before he took to the cestus. Tom has been in action at sea, and is now only three-and-thirty. A great man! has a wife and a mistress, and conversations well—bating some sad omissions and misapplications of the aspirate. Tom is an old friend of mine; I have seen some of his best battles in my nonage. He is now a publican, and, I fear, a sinner;—for Mrs. Crib is on alimony, and Tom's daughter lives with the champion. *This* Tom told me,—Tom, having an opinion of my morals, passed her off as a legal spouse. Talking of her, he said, 'she was the truest of women'—from which I immediately inferred she could *not* be his wife, and so it turned out.

These panegyrics don't belong to matrimony;—for, if 'true,' a man don't think it necessary to say so; and if not, the less he says the better. Crib is the only man except —, I ever heard harangue upon his wife's virtue; and I listened to both with great credence and patience, and stuffed my handkerchief into my mouth, when I found yawning irresistible—By the by, I am yawning now—so, good night to thee.—*Νωαίρον.*

Thursday, November 26

Awoke a little feverish, but no headach—no dreams neither, thanks to stupor! Two letters; one from —, the other from Lady Melbourne—both excellent in their respective styles. —'s contained also a very pretty lyric on 'concealed griefs;' if not her own, yet very like her. Why did she not say that the stanzas were, or were not, of her composition? I do not know whether to wish them *hers* or not. I have no great esteem for poetical persons, particularly women; they have so much of the 'ideal' in *practics*, as well as *ethics*.

I have been thinking lately a good deal of Mary Duff. How very

odd that I should have been so utterly, devotedly fond of that girl, at an age when I could neither feel passion, nor know the meaning of the word. And the effect! My mother used always to rally me about this childish amour; and, at last, many years after, when I was sixteen, she told me one day, 'Oh, Byron, I have had a letter from Edinburgh from Miss Abercromby, and your old sweetheart Mary Duff is married to a Mr. Coe.' And what was my answer? I really cannot explain or account for my feelings at that moment; but they nearly threw me into convulsions, and alarmed my mother so much, that after I grew better, she generally avoided the subject—to me—and contented herself with telling it to all her acquaintance. Now, what could this be? I had never seen her since her mother's *faux pas* at Aberdeen had been the cause of her removal to her grandmother's at Banff; we were both the merest children. I had and have been attached fifty times since that period; yet I recollect all we said to each other, all our caresses, her features, my restlessness, sleeplessness, my tormenting my mother's maid to write for me to her, which she at last did, to quiet me. Poor Nancy thought I was wild, and, as I could not write for myself, became my secretary. I remember, too, our walks, and the happiness of sitting by Mary, in the children's apartment, at their house not far from the Plain-stanes at Aberdeen, while her lesser sister Helen played with the doll, and we sat gravely making love, in our way.

How the deuce did all this occur so early? where could it originate? I certainly had no sexual ideas for years afterwards; and yet my misery, my love for that girl were so violent, that I sometimes doubt if I have ever been really attached since. Be that as it may, hearing of her marriage several years after was like a thunder-stroke—it nearly choked me—to the horror of my mother and the astonishment and almost incredulity of every body. And it is a phenomenon in my existence (for I was not eight years old) which has puzzled, and will puzzle me to the latest hour of it; and lately, I know not why, the *recollection* (not the attachment) has recurred as forcibly as ever. I wonder if she can have the least remembrance of it or me? or remember pitying her sister Helen for not having an admirer too? How very pretty is the perfect image of her in my memory—her brown, dark hair, and hazel eyes; her very dress! I should be quite grieved to see *her now*; the reality, however beautiful, would destroy, or at least confuse, the features of the lovely Peri which then existed in her, and still lives in my imagination, at the distance of more than sixteen years. I am now twenty-five and odd months. . . .

I think my mother told the circumstances (on my hearing of her

marriage) to the Parkynses, and certainly to the Pigot family, and probably mentioned it in her answer to Miss A., who was well acquainted with my childish *penchant*, and had sent the news on purpose for *me*,—and thanks to her!

Next to the beginning, the conclusion has often occupied my reflections, in the way of investigation. That the facts are thus, others know as well as I, and my memory yet tells me so, in more than a whisper. But, the more I reflect, the more I am bewildered to assign any cause for this precocity of affection.

Lord Holland invited me to dinner to-day; but three days' dining would destroy me. So, without eating at all since yesterday, I went to my box at Covent Garden.

Saw — looking very pretty, though quite a different style of beauty from the other two. She has the finest eyes in the world, out of which she pretends *not* to see, and the longest eyelashes I ever saw, since Leila's and Phannio's Moslem curtains of the light. She has much beauty,—just enough,—but is, I think, *méchante*.

I have been pondering on the miseries of separation, that—oh how seldom we see those we love! yet we live ages in moments, *when met*. The only thing that consoles me during absence is the reflection that no mental or personal estrangement, from ennui, or disagreement, can take place; and when people meet hereafter, even though many changes may have taken place in the mean time, still, unless they are *tired* of each other, they are ready to reunite, and do not blame each other for the circumstances that severed them.

*Saturday 27, (I believe—or rather am in doubt,
which is the ne plus ultra of mortal faith.)*

I have missed a day; and, as the Irishman said, or Joe Miller says for him, 'have gained a loss,' or *by* the loss. Every thing is settled for Holland, and nothing but a cough, or a caprice of my fellow-traveller's, can stop us. Carriage ordered, funds prepared, and, probably, a gale of wind into the bargain. *N'importe*—I believe, with Clym o' the Clow, or Robin Hood, 'By our Mary, (dear name!) thou art both Mother and May, I think it never was a man's lot to die before his day.' Heigh for Helvoetsluys, and so forth!

To-night I went with young Henry Fox to see *Nourjahad*, a drama, which the *Morning Post* hath laid to my charge, but of which I cannot even guess the author. I wonder what they will next inflict upon me. They cannot well sink below a melodrama; but that is better than a satire, (at least, a personal one,) with which I stand truly arraigned, and in atonement of which I am resolved to bear silently all criticisms,

abuses, and even praises, for bad pantomimes never composed by me, without even a contradictory aspect. I suppose the root of this report is my loan to the manager of my Turkish drawings for his dresses, to which he was more welcome than to my name. I suppose the real author will soon own it, as it has succeeded; if not, Job be my model, and Lethe my beverage!

— has received the portrait safe: and, in answer, the only remark she makes upon it is, 'indeed it is like'—and again, 'indeed it is like.' With her the likeness 'covered a multitude of sins;' for I happen to know that this portrait was not a flatterer, but dark and stern,—even black as the mood in which my mind was scorching last July, when I sat for it. All the others of me, like most portraits whatsoever, are, of course, more agreeable than nature.

Redde the *Edinburgh Review* of Rogers. He is ranked highly; but where he should be. There is a summary view of us all—*Moore* and *me* among the rest; and both (the *first* justly) praised—though, by implication (justly again) placed beneath our memorable friend. Mackintosh is the writer, and also of the critique on the *Stael*. His grand essay on Burke, I hear, is for the next number. But I know nothing of the *Edinburgh*, or of any other *Review*, but from rumour; and I have long ceased—indeed, I could not, in justice, complain of any, even though I were to rate poetry, in general, and my rhymes in particular, more highly than I really do. To withdraw *myself* from *myself* (oh that cursed selfishness!) has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all; and publishing is also the continuance of the same object, by the action it affords to the mind, which else recoils upon itself. If I valued fame, I should flatter received opinions, which have gathered strength by time, and will yet wear longer than any living works to the contrary. But, for the soul of me, I cannot and will not give the lie to my own thoughts and doubts, come what may. If I am a fool, it is, at least, a doubting one; and I envy no one the certainty of his self-approved wisdom.

All are inclined to believe what they covet, from a lottery-ticket up to a passport to Paradise,—in which, from the description, I see nothing very tempting. My restlessness tells me I have something 'within that passeth show.' It is for Him, who made it, to prolong that spark of celestial fire which illuminates, yet burns, this frail tenement; but I see no such horror in a 'dreamless sleep,' and I have no conception of any existence which duration would not render tiresome. How else 'fell the angels,' even according to your creed? They were immortal, heavenly, and happy, as their *apostate Abdiel* is now by his treachery. Time must decide; and eternity won't be the less agreeable

or more horrible because one did not expect it. In the mean time, I am grateful for some good, and tolerably patient under certain evils—*grace à Dieu et mon bon tempérament.*

Tuesday, 30th

Two days missed in my log-book;—*hiatus* haud *defendendus*. They were as little worth recollection as the rest; and, luckily, laziness or society prevented me from *notching* them.

Sunday, I dined with the Lord Holland in St. James's Square. Large party—among them Sir S. Romilly and Lady Ry.—General Sir Somebody Bentham, a man of science and talent, I am told—Horner—the Horner, an Edinburgh Reviewer, an excellent speaker in the 'Honourable House,' very pleasing, too, and gentlemanly in company, as far as I have seen—Sharpe—Philips of Lancashire—Lord John Russell, and others, 'good men and true.' Holland's society is very good; you always see some one or other in it worth knowing. Stuffed myself with sturgeon, and exceeded in champagne and wine in general but not to confusion of head. When I *do* dine, I gorge like an Arab or a Boa snake, on fish and vegetables, but no meat. I am always better, however, on my tea and biscuit than any other regimen, and even *that* sparingly.

Why does Lady H. always have that damned screen between the whole room and the fire? I, who bear cold no better than an antelope, and never yet found a sun quite *done* to my taste, was absolutely petrified, and could not even shiver. All the rest, too, looked as if they were just unpacked, like salmon from an ice-basket, and set down to table for that day only. When she retired, I watched their looks as I dismissed the screen, and every cheek thawed, and every nose reddened with the anticipated glow.

Saturday, I went with Harry Fox to *Nourjahad*; and, I believe, convinced him, by incessant yawning, that it was not mine. I wish the precious author would own it, and release me from his fame. The dresses are pretty, but not in costume;—Mrs. Horn's, all but the turban, and the want of a small dagger (if she is a sultana), *perfect*. I never saw a Turkish woman with a turban in my life—nor did any one else. The sultanas have a small poniard at the waist. The dialogue is drowsy—the action heavy—the scenery fine—the actors tolerable. I can't say much for their *seraglio*—Tercsa, Phannio, or —, were worth them all.

Sunday, a very handsome note from Mackintosh, who is a rare instance of the union of very transcendent talent and great good nature. To-day (Tuesday) a very pretty billet from M. la Baronne de

Stael Holstein. She is pleased to be much pleased with my mention of her and her last work in my notes. I spoke as I thought. Her works are my delight, and so is she herself, for—half an hour. I don't like her politics—at least, her *having changed* them; had she been *qualis ab incepto*, it were nothing. But she is a woman by herself, and has done more than all the rest of them together, intellectually;—she ought to have been a man. She *flatters* me very prettily in her note;—but I *know* it. The reason that adulation is not displeasing is, that, though untrue, it shows one to be of consequence enough, in one way or other, to induce people to lie, to make us their friend:—that is their concern.

— is, I hear, thriving on the repute of a *puni* which was *mine* (at Mackintosh's dinner some time back), on Ward, who was asking, 'how much it would take to *re-whig* him?' I answered that, probably, 'he must first, before he was *re-whigged*, be *re-warded*.' This foolish quibble, before the Stael and Mackintosh, and a number of conversationers, has been mouthed about, and at last settled on the head of —, where long may it remain!

George is returned from afloat to get a new ship. He looks thin, but better than I expected. I like George much more than most people like their heirs. He is a fine fellow, and every inch a sailor. I would do any thing, *but apostatise*, to get him on in his profession.

Lewis called. It is a good and good-humoured man, but pestilently prolix and paradoxical and *personal*. If he would but talk half, and reduce his visits to an hour, he would add to his popularity. As an author he is very good, and his vanity is *ouverte*, like Erskine's, and yet not offending.

Yesterday, a very pretty letter from Annabella, which I answered. What an odd situation and friendship is ours!—without one spark of love on either side, and produced by circumstances which in general lead to coldness on one side, and aversion on the other. She is a very superior woman, and very little spoiled, which is strange in an heiress—a girl of twenty—a peeress that is to be, in her own right—an only child, and a *savante*, who has always had her own way. She is a poetess—a mathematician—a metaphysician, and yet, withal, very kind, generous, and gentle, with very little pretension. Any other head would be turned with half her acquisitions, and a tenth of her advantages.

Wednesday, December 1, 1813

To-day responded to La Baronne de Stael Holstein, and sent to Leigh Hunt (an acquisition to my acquaintance—through Moore—of

last summer) a copy of the two Turkish tales. Hunt is an extraordinary character, and not exactly of the present age. He reminds me more of the Pym and Hampden times—much talent, great independence of spirit, and an austere, yet not repulsive, aspect. If he goes on *qualis ab incepto*, I know few men who will deserve more praise or obtain it. I must go and see him again;—the rapid succession of adventure, since last summer, added to some serious uneasiness and business, have interrupted our acquaintance; but he is a man worth knowing; and though, for his own sake, I wish him out of prison, I like to study character in such situations. He has been unshaken, and will continue so. I don't think him deeply versed in life;—he is the bigot of virtue (not religion), and enamoured of the beauty of that 'empty name,' as the last breath of Brutus pronounced, and every day proves it. He is, perhaps, a little opinionated, as all men who are the centre of circles, wide or narrow—the Sir Oracles, in whose name two or three are gathered together—must be, and as even Johnson was but, withal, a valuable man, and less vain than success and even the consciousness of preferring 'the right to the expedient' might excuse.

To-morrow there is a party of *purple* at the 'blue' Miss Berry's. Shall I go? um!—I don't much affect your blue-bottles;—but one ought to be civil. There will be, 'I guess now' (as the Americans say), the Staels and Mackintoshes—good—the —s and —s—not so good—the —s, etc., etc.—good for nothing. Perhaps that blue-winged Kashmirian butterfly of book-learning, Lady Charlemont, will be there. I hope so; it is a pleasure to look upon that most beautiful of faces.

Wrote to H.:—he has been telling that I——. I am sure, at least, I did not mention it, and I wish he had not. He is a good fellow, and I obliged myself ten times more by being of use than I did him,—and there's an end on't.

Baldwin is boring me to present their King's Bench petition. I presented Cartwright's last year; and Stanhope and I stood against the whole House, and mouthed it valiantly—and had some fun and a little abuse for our opposition. But 'I am not i' th' vein' for this business. Now, had — been here, she would have *made* me do it. There is a woman, who, amid all her fascination, always urged a man to usefulness or glory. Had she remained, she had been my tutelar genius.

Baldwin is very importunate—but, poor fellow, 'I can't get out, I can't get out—said the starling.' Ah, I am as bad as that dog Sterne, who preferred whining over 'a dead ass to relieving a living mother'—villain—hypocrite—slave—sycophant! but I am no better. Here I

cannot stimulate myself to a speech for the sake of these unfortunates, and three words and half a smile of — had she been here to urge it (and urge it she infallibly would—at least she always pressed me on senatorial duties, and particularly in the cause of weakness) would have made me an advocate, if not an orator. Curse on Rochefoucault for being always right! In him a lie were virtue,—or, at least, a comfort to his readers.

George Byron has not called to-day; I hope he will be an admiral, and, perhaps, Lord Byron into the bargain. If he would but marry, I would engage never to marry myself, or cut him out of the heirship. He would be happier, and I should like nephews better than sons.

I shall soon be six-and-twenty (January 22d, 1814). Is there any thing in the future that can possibly console us for not being always *twenty-five*?

Oh Gioventù!

Oh Primavera! gioventù dell' anno.

Oh Gioventù! primavera della vita.

Sunday, December 5

Dallas's nephew (son to the American Attorney-general) is arrived in this country, and tells Dallas that my rhymes are very popular in the United States. These are the first tidings that have ever sounded like *Fame* to my ears—to be redde on the banks of the Ohio! The greatest pleasure I ever derived, of this kind, was from an extract, in Cooke the actor's life, from his journal, stating that in the reading-room at Albany, near Washington, he perused *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. To be popular in a rising and far country has a kind of *posthumous feel*, very different from the ephemeral *éclat* and *fêteing*, buzzing and party-ing compliments of the well-dressed multitude. I can safely say that, during my *reign* in the spring of 1812, I regretted nothing but its duration of six weeks instead of a fortnight, and was heartily glad to resign.

Last night I supped with Lewis; and, as usual, though I neither exceeded in solids nor fluids, have been half dead ever since. My stomach is entirely destroyed by long abstinence, and the rest will probably follow. Let it—I only wish the *pain* over. The 'leap in the dark' is the least to be dreaded.

The Duke of — called. I have told them forty times that, except to half-a-dozen old and specified acquaintances, I am invisible. His Grace is a good, noble, ducal person; but I am content to think so at a distance, and so—I was not at home.

Galt called.—Mem.—to ask some one to speak to Raymond in

favour of his play. We are old fellow-travellers, and, with all his eccentricities, he has much strong sense, experience of the world, and is, as far as I have seen, a good-natured philosophical fellow. I showed him Sligo's letter on the reports of the Turkish girl's *aventure* at Athens soon after it happened. He and Lord Holland, Lewis, and Moore, and Rogers, and Lady Melbourne have seen it. Murray has a copy. I thought it had been *unknown*, and wish it were; but Sligo arrived only some days after, and the *rumours* are the subject of his letter. That I shall preserve,—*it is as well*. Lewis and Galt were both *horrified*; and L. wondered I did not introduce the situation into *The Giaour*. He *may* wonder;—he might wonder more at that production's being written at all. But to describe the *feelings* of that situation were impossible—it is *icy* even to recollect them.

The *Bride of Abydos* was published on Thursday the second of December; but how it is liked or disliked, I know not. Whether it succeeds or not is no fault of the public, against whom I can have no complaint. But I am much more indebted to the tale than I can ever be to the most partial reader; as it wrung my thoughts from reality to imagination—from selfish regrets to vivid recollections—and recalled me to a country replete with the *brightest* and *darkest*, but always most *lively* colours of my memory. Sharpe called, but was not let in—which I regret.

Saw [Rogers] yesterday. I have not kept my appointment at Middleton, which has not pleased him, perhaps; and my projected voyage with [Ward] will, perhaps, please him less. But I wish to keep well with both. They are instruments that don't do in concert; but, surely, their separate tones are very musical, and I won't give up either.

It is well if I don't jar between these great discords. At present I stand tolerably well with all, but I cannot adopt their *dislikes*;—so many *sets*. Holland's is the first;—every thing *distingué* is welcome there, and certainly the *ton* of his society is the best. Then there is Madame de Stael's—there I never go, though I might, had I courted it. It is composed of the —s and the — family, with a strange sprinkling,—orators, dandies, and all kinds of *Blue*, from the regular Grub Street uniform, down to the azure jacket of the *Littérateur*. To see — and — sitting together, at dinner, always reminds me of the grave, where all distinctions of friend and foe are levelled; and they—the Reviewer and Reviewée—the Rhinoceros and Elephant—the Mammoth and Megalonyx—all will lie quietly together. They now *sit* together, as silent, but not so quiet, as if they were already immured.

I did not go to the Berrys' the other night. The elder is a woman of much talent, and both are handsome, and must have been beautiful. To-night asked to Lord H.'s—shall I go? um!—perhaps.

Morning, two o'clock

Went to Lord H.'s—party numerous—*milady* in perfect good humour, and consequently *perfect*. No one more agreeable, or perhaps so much so, when she will. Asked for Wednesday to dine and meet the Stael—asked particularly, I believe, out of mischief to see the first interview after the *note*, with which Corinne professes herself to be so much taken. I don't much like it; she always talks of *myself* or *herself*, and I am not (except in soliloquy, as now,) much enamoured of either subject—especially one's works. What the devil shall I say about *De l'Allemagne*? I like it prodigiously; but unless I can twist my admiration into some fantastical expression, she won't believe me; and I know, by experience, I shall be overwhelmed with fine things about rhyme, etc., etc. The lover, Mr. — [Rocca], was there to-night, and C— said 'it was the only proof *he* had seen of her good taste.' Monsieur L' Amant is remarkably handsome; but *I* don't think more so than her book.

C— [Campbell] looks well,—seems pleased, and dressed to *sprucery*. A blue coat becomes him,—so does his new wig. He really looked as if Apollo had sent him a birthday suit, or a wedding-garment, and was witty and lively. He abused Corinne's book, which I regret; because, firstly, he understands German, and is consequently a fair judge; and, secondly, he is *first-rate*, and, consequently, the best of judges. I reverence and admire him; but I won't give up my opinion—why should I? I read *her* again and again, and there can be no affectation in this. I cannot be mistaken (except in taste) in a book I read and lay down, and take up again; and no book can be totally bad which finds *one*, even *one* reader, who can say as much sincerely.

Campbell talks of lecturing next spring; his last lectures were eminently successful. Moore thought of it, but gave it up,—I don't know why. — had been prating *dignity* to him, and such stuff; as if a man disgraced himself by instructing and pleasing at the same time.

Introduced to Marquis Buckingham—saw Lord Gower—he is going to Holland; Sir J. and Lady Mackintosh and Horner, G. Lamb, with I know not how many (Richard Wellesley, one—a clever man), grouped about the room. Little Henry Fox, a very fine boy, and very promising in mind and manner,—he went away to bed, before I had

time to talk to him. I am sure I had rather hear him than all the *savans*.

Monday, Dec. 6

Murray tells me that Croker asked him why the thing was called the *Bride* of Abydos? It is a cursed awkward question, being unanswerable. *She* is not a *bride*, only about to be one; but for, etc., etc., etc.

I don't wonder at his finding out the *Bull*; but the detection — is too late to do any good. I was a great fool to make it, and am ashamed of not being an Irishman.

Campbell last night seemed a little nettled at something or other—I know not what. We were standing in the ante-saloon, when Lord H. brought out of the other room a vessel of some composition similar to that which is used in Catholic churches, and, seeing us, he exclaimed, 'Here is some *incense* for you.' Campbell answered—'Carry it to Lord Byron, *he is used to it*.'

Now, this comes of 'bearing no brother near the throne.' I, who have no throne, nor wish to have one *now*, whatever I may have done, am at perfect peace with all the poetical fraternity: or, at least, if I dislike any, it is not *poetically*, but *personally*. Surely the field of thought is infinite; what does it signify who is before or behind in a race where there is no *goal*? The temple of fame is like that of the Persians, the universe; our altar, the tops of mountains. I should be equally content with Mount Caucasus, or Mount Anything; and those who like it, may have Mount Blanc or Chimborazo, without my envy of their elevation.

I think I may *now* speak thus; for I have just published a poem, and am quite ignorant whether it is *likely* to be *liked* or not. I have hitherto heard little in its commendation, and no one can *downright* abuse it to one's face, except in print. It can't be good, or I should not have stumbled over the threshold, and blundered in my very title. But I began it with my heart full of —, and my head of *orientalities* (I can't call them *isms*), and wrote on rapidly.

This journal is a relief. When I am tired—as I generally am—out comes this, and down goes every thing. But I can't read it over; and God knows what contradictions it may contain. If I am sincere with myself (but I fear one lies more to one's self than to any one else), every page should confute, refute, and utterly abjure its predecessor.

Another scribble from Martin Baldwin the petitioner; I have neither head nor nerves to present it. That confounded supper at Lewis's has spoiled my digestion and my philanthropy. I have no

more charity than a cruet of vinegar. Would I were an ostrich, and dieted on fire-irons,—or any thing that my gizzard could get the better of.

To-day saw Ward. His uncle is dying, and W. don't much affect our Dutch determinations. I dine with him on Thursday, provided *l'oncle* is not dined upon, or peremptorily bespoke by the posthumous epicures before that day. I wish he may recover—not for *our* dinner's sake, but to disappoint the undertaker, and the rascally reptiles that may well wait, since they *will* dine at last.

Gell called—he of Troy—after I was out. Mem.—to return his visit. But my Mem. are the very land-marks of forgetfulness;—something like a light-house, with a ship wrecked under the nose of its lantern. I never look at a Mem. without seeing that I have remembered to forget. Mem.—I have forgotten to pay Pitt's taxes, and suppose I shall be surcharged. 'An I do not turn rebel when thou art king'—oons! I believe my very biscuit is leavened with that impostor's imposts.

Lady Melbourne returns from Jersey's to-morrow;—I must call: A Mr. Thomson has sent a song, which I must applaud. I hate annoying them with censure or silence;—and yet I hate *lettering*.

Saw Lord Glenbervie and his Prospectus, at Murray's, of a new Treatise on Timber. Now here is a man more useful than all the historians and rhymers ever planted. For, by preserving our woods and forests, he furnishes materials for all the history of Britain worth reading, and all the odes worth nothing.

Redde a good deal, but desultorily. My head is crammed with the most useless lumber. It is odd that when I do read, I can only bear the chicken broth of—*any thing* but Novels. It is many a year since I looked into one, (though they are sometimes ordered, by way of experiment, but never taken,) till I looked yesterday at the worst parts of the *Monk*. These descriptions ought to have been written by Tiberius at Caprea—they are forced—the *philtered* ideas of a jaded voluptuary. It is to me inconceivable how they could have been composed by a man of only twenty—his age when he wrote them. They have no nature—all the sour cream of cantharides. I should have suspected Buffon of writing them on the death-bed of his detestable dotage. I had never redde this edition, and merely looked at them from curiosity and recollection of the noise they made, and the name they have left to Lewis. But they could do no harm, except . . .

Called this evening on my agent—my business as usual. Our strange adventures are the only inheritances of our family, that have not diminished.

I shall now smoke two cigars, and get me to bed. The cigars don't keep well here. They get as old as a *donna di quaranti anni* in the sun of Africa. The Havannah are the best;—but neither are so pleasant as a hooka or chiboque. The Turkish tobacco is mild, and their horses entire—two things as they should be. I am so far obliged to this Journal, that it preserves me from verse,—at least from keeping it. I have just thrown a poem into the fire (which it has relighted to my great comfort), and have smoked out of my head the plan of another. I wish I could as easily get rid of thinking, or, at least, the confusion of thought.

Tuesday, December 7

Went to bed, and slept dreamlessly, but not refreshingly. Awoke, and up an hour before being called; but dawdled three hours in dressing. When one subtracts from life infancy (which is vegetation),—sleep, eating, and swilling—buttoning and unbuttoning—how much remains of downright existence? The summer of a dormouse.

Redde the papers and tea-ed and soda-watered, and found out that the fire was badly lighted. Lord Glenbervie wants me to go to Brighton—um!

This morning, a very pretty billet from the Stael about meeting her at Ld. H.'s to-morrow. She has written, I dare say, twenty such this morning to different people, all equally flattering to each. So much the better for her and those who believe all she wishes them, or they wish to believe. She has been pleased to be pleased with my slight eulogy in the note annexed to *The Bride*. This is to be accounted for in several ways,—firstly, all women like all, or any, praise; secondly, this was unexpected, because I have never courted her; and, thirdly, as Scrub says, those who have been all their lives regularly praised, by regular critics, like a little variety, and are glad when any one goes out of his way to say a civil thing; and, fourthly, she is a very good-natured creature, which is the best reason, after all, and, perhaps, the only one.

A knock—knocks single and double. Bland called. He says Dutch society (he has been in Holland) is second-hand French; but the women are like women every where else. This is a bore: I should like to see them a little *unlike*; but that can't be expected.

Went out—came home—this, that, and the other—and 'all is vanity, saith the preacher,' and so say I, as part of his congregation. Talking of vanity, whose praise do I prefer? Why, Mrs. Inchbald's, and that of the Americans. The first, because her *Simple Story* and *Nature and Art* are, to me, *true* to their titles; and, consequently, her

short note to Rogers about *The Giaour* delighted me more than any thing, except the *Edinburgh Review*. I like the Americans, because I happened to be in *Asia*, while the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* were redde in *America*. If I could have had a speech against the *Slave Trade in Africa*, and an epitaph on a dog in *Europe* (i.e. in the *Morning Post*), my *vertex sublimis* would certainly have displaced stars enough to overthrow the Newtonian system.

Friday, December 10, 1813

I am *ennuyé* beyond my usual tense of that yawning verb, which I am always conjugating; and I don't find that society much mends the matter. I am too lazy to shoot myself—and it would annoy Augusta, and perhaps —; but it would be a good thing for George, on the other side, and no bad one for me; but I won't be tempted.

I have had the kindest letter from Moore. I *do* think that man is the best-hearted, the only *hearted* being I ever encountered; and, then, his talents are equal to his feelings.

Dined on Wednesday at Lord H.'s—the Staffords, Staels, Cowpers, Ossulstones, Melbournes, Mackintoshes, etc., etc.—and was introduced to the Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford,—an unexpected event. My quarrel with Lord Carlisle (their or his brother-in-law) having rendered it improper, I suppose, brought it about. But, if it was to happen at all, I wonder it did not occur before. She is handsome, and must have been beautiful—and her manners are *princessly*.

The Stael was at the other end of the table, and less loquacious than heretofore. We are now very good friends; though she asked Lady Melbourne whether I had really any *bonhomme*. She might as well have asked that question before she told C. L. '*c'est un démon*.' True enough, but rather premature, for *she* could not have found it out, and so—she wants me to dine there next Sunday.

Murray prospers, as far as circulation. For my part, I adhere (in liking) to my Fragment. It is no wonder that I wrote one—my mind is a fragment.

Saw Lord Gower, Tierney, etc. in the square. Took leave of Lord Gower, who is going to Holland and Germany. He tells me that he carries with him a parcel of *Harolds* and *Giaours*, etc., for the readers of Berlin, who, it seems, read English, and have taken a caprice for mine. Um!—have I been *German* all this time, when I thought myself *Oriental*?

Lent Tierney my box for to-morrow; and received a ~~new~~ comedy sent by Lady C. A.—but *not hers*. I must read it, and endeavour

not to displease the author. I hate annoying them with cavil; but a comedy I take to be the most difficult of compositions, more so than tragedy.

Galt says there is a coincidence between the first part of *The Bride* and some story of his—whether published or not, I know not, never having seen it. He is almost the last person on whom any one would commit literary larceny, and I am not conscious of any *witting* thefts on any of the genus. As to originality, all pretensions are ludicrous,—‘there is nothing new under the sun.’

Went last night to the play. Invited out to a party, but did not go;—right. Refused to go to Lady ——’s on Monday;—right again. If I must fritter away my life, I would rather do it alone. I was much tempted;—C—— looked so Turkish with her red turban, and her regular, dark, and clear features. Not that *she* and *I* ever were, or could be, any thing; but I love any aspect that reminds me of the ‘children of the sun.’

To dine to-day with Rogers and Sharpe, for which I have some appetite, not having tasted food for the preceding forty-eight hours. I wish I could leave off eating altogether.

Sunday, December 12

By Galt’s answer, I find it is some story in *real life*, and not any work with which my late composition coincides. It is still more singular, for mine is drawn from *existence* also.

I have sent an excuse to Madame de Stael. I do not feel sociable enough for dinner to-day;—and I will not go to Sheridan’s on Wednesday. Not that I do not admire and prefer his unequalled conversation; but—that ‘*but*’ must only be intelligible to thoughts I cannot write. Sheridan was in good talk at Rogers’s the other night, but I only stayed till *nine*. All the world are to be at the Stael’s to-night, and I am not sorry to escape any part of it. I only go out to get me a fresh appetite for being alone. Went out—did not go to the Stael’s but to Ld. Holland’s. Party numerous—conversation general. Stayed late—made a blunder—got over it—came home and went to bed, not having eaten. Rather empty, but *fresco*, which is the great point with me.

Monday, December 13, 1813

Called at three places—read, and got ready to leave town to-morrow. Murray has had a letter from his brother bibliopole of Edinburgh, who says, ‘he is lucky in having such a *poet*’—something

as if one was a pack-horse, or 'ass, or any thing that is his:' or, like Mrs. Packwood, who replied to some inquiry after the Odes on Razors,—'Laws, sir, we keeps a poet.' The same illustrious Edinburgh bookseller once sent an order for books, poesy, and cookery, with this agreeable postscript—'The *Harold* and *Cookery* are much wanted.' Such is fame, and, after all, quite as good as any other 'life in others' breath.' 'Tis much the same to divide purchasers with Hannah Glasse or Hannah More.

Some editor of some magazine has announced to Murray his intention of abusing the thing '*without reading it*.' So much the better; if he redde it first, he would abuse it more.

Allen (Lord Holland's Allen—the best informed and one of the ablest men I know—a perfect Magliabecchi—a devourer, a *Helluo* of books, and an observer of men,) has lent me a quantity of Burns's unpublished and never-to-be published Letters. They are full of oaths and obscene songs. What an antithetical mind!—tenderness, roughness—delicacy, coarseness—sentiment, sensuality—soaring and grovelling, dirt and deity—all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay!

It seems strange; a true voluptuary will never abandon his mind to the grossness of reality. It is by exalting the earthly, the material, the *physique* of our pleasures, by veiling these ideas, by forgetting them altogether, or, at least, never naming them hardly to one's self, that we alone can prevent them from disgusting.

December 14, 15, 16

Much done, but nothing to record. It is quite enough to set down my thoughts,—my actions will rarely bear retrospection.

December 17, 18

Lord Holland told me a curious piece of sentimentality in Sheridan. The other night we were all delivering our respective and various opinions on him and other *hommes marquans*, and mine was this:—'Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been, *par excellence*, always the best of its kind. He has written the best comedy (*School for Scandal*), the best drama (in my mind, far before that St. Giles's lampoon, the *Beggar's Opera*), the best farce (the *Critic*—it is only too good for a farce), and the best Address (Monologue on Garrick), and, to crown all, delivered the very best Oration (the famous Begum Speech) ever conceived or heard in this country.' Somebody told S. this the next day, and on hearing it he burst into tears!

Poor Brinsley! if they were tears of pleasure, I would rather have said these few, but most sincere, words than have written the *Iliad* or made his own celebrated *Philippic*. Nay, his own comedy never gratified me more than to hear that he had derived a moment's gratification from any praise of mine, humble as it must appear to my elders and my betters.'

Went to my box at Covent Garden to-night; and my delicacy felt a little shocked at seeing S——'s mistress (who, to my certain knowledge, was actually educated, from her birth, for her profession) sitting with her mother, 'a three-piled b——d, b——d-Major to the army,' in a private box opposite. I felt rather indignant; but, casting my eyes round the house, in the next box to me, and the next, and the next, were the most distinguished old and young Babylonians of quality;—so I burst out a laughing. It was really odd; Lady —— divorced—Lady —— and her daughter, Lady ——, both *divorceable*—Mrs. ——, in the next the *like*, and still nearer ——! What an assemblage to me, who know all their histories. It was as if the house had been divided between your public and your *understood* courtesans;—but the intrigantes much outnumbered the regular mercenaries. On the other side were only Pauline and her mother, and, next box to her, three of inferior note. Now, where lay the difference between her and *manmia*, and Lady —— and daughter? except that the two last may enter Carlton and any *other house*, and the two first are limited to the opera and b—— house. How I do delight in observing life as it really is!—and myself, after all, the worst of any. But no matter—I must avoid egotism, which, just now, would be no vanity.

I have lately written a wild, rambling, unfinished rhapsody, called *The Devil's Drive*, the notion of which I took from *Poison's Devil's Walk*.

Redde some Italian, and wrote two Sonnets on ——, I never wrote but one sonnet before, and that was not in earnest, and many years ago, as an exercise—and I will never write another. They are the most puling, petrifying, stupidly platonic compositions. I detest the Petrarch so much, that I would not be the man even to have obtained his Laura, which the metaphysical, whining dotard never could.

January 16, 1814

To-morrow I leave town for a few days. I saw Lewis to-day, who is just returned from Oatlands, where he has been squabbling with Mad. de Stael about himself, Clarissa Harlowe, Mackintosh, and me. My homage has never been paid in that quarter, or we would have

agreed still worse. I don't talk—I can't flatter, and won't listen, except to a pretty or a foolish woman. She bored Lewis with praises of himself till he sickened—found out that Clarissa was perfection, and Mackintosh the first man in England. There I agree, at least *one* of the first—but Lewis did not. As to Clarissa, I leave to those who can read it to judge and dispute. I could not do the one, and am, consequently, not qualified for the other. She told Lewis wisely, he being my friend, that I was affected, in the first place; and that, in the next place, I committed the heinous offence of sitting at dinner with my eyes shut, or half shut. I wonder if I really have this trick. I must cue myself of it, if true. One insensibly acquires awkward habits, which should be broken in time. If this is one, I wish I had been told of it before. It would not so much signify if one was always to be checkmated by a plain woman, but one may as well see some of one's neighbours, as well as the plate upon the table.

I should like, of all things, to have heard the Amabæan eclogue between her and Lewis—both obstinate, clever, odd, garrulous, and shrill. In fact, one could have heard nothing else. But they fell out, alas!—and now they will never quarrel again. Could not one reconcile them for the 'nonce?' Poor Corinne—she will find that some of her fine sayings won't suit our fine ladies and gentlemen.

I am getting rather into admiration of [Lady C. Annesley], the youngest sister of [Lady F. Webster]. A wife would be my salvation. I am sure the wives of my acquaintances have hitherto done me little good. Catherine is beautiful, but very young, and, I think, a fool. But I have not seen enough to judge; besides, I hate an *esprit* in petticoats. That she won't love me is very probable, nor shall I love her. But, on my system, and the modern system in general, that don't signify. The business (if it came to business) would probably be arranged between papa and me. She would have her own way; I am good-humoured to women, and docile; and, if I did not fall in love with her, which I should try to prevent, we should be a very comfortable couple. As to conduct, *that* she must look to. But *if* I love, I shall be jealous;—and for that reason I will not be in love. Though, after all, I doubt my temper, and fear I should not be so patient as becomes the *bienséance* of a married man in my station. Divorce ruins the poor *femme*, and damages are a paltry compensation. I do fear my temper would lead me into some of our oriental tricks of vengeance, or, at any rate, into a summary appeal to the court of twelve paces. So 'I'll none on't,' but c'en remain single and solitary;—though I should like to have somebody now and then to yawn with one.

Ward, and, after him, —, has stolen one of my buffooneries about Mde. de Staël's Metaphysics and the Fog, and passed it, by speech and letter, as their own. As Gibbet says, 'they are the most of a gentleman of any on the road.' W. is in sad enmity with the Whigs about this Review of Fox (if he *did* review him);—all the epigrammatists and essayists are at him. I hate *odds*, and wish he may beat them. As for me, by the blessing of indifference, I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments; and, as it is the shortest and most agreeable and summary feeling imaginable, the first moment of an universal republic would convert me into an advocate for single and uncontradicted despotism. The fact is, riches are power, and poverty is slavery all over the earth, and one sort of establishment is no better nor worse for a *people* than another. I shall adhere to my party, because it would not be honourable to act otherwise; but, as to *opinions*, I don't think politics *worth an opinion*. *Conduct* is another thing:—if you begin with a party, go on with them. I have no consistency, except in politics; and *that* probably arises from my indifference on the subject altogether.

Feb. 18

Better than a month since I last journalised:—most of it out of London and at Notts., but a busy one and a pleasant, at least three weeks of it. On my return, I find all the newspapers in hysterics, and town in an uproar, on the avowal and re-publication of two stanzas on Princess Charlotte's weeping at Regency's speech to Lauderdale in 1812. They are daily at it still;—some of the abuse good, all of it hearty. They talk of a motion in our House upon it—be it so.

Got up—redde the *Morning Post* containing the battle of Buonaparte, the destruction of the Custom-house, and a paragraph on me as long as my pedigree, and vituperative, as usual.

Hobhouse is returned to England. He is my best friend, the most lively, and a man of the most sterling talents extant.

The Corsair has been conceived, written, published, etc. since I last took up this journal. They tell me it has great success;—it was written *con amore*, and much from *existence*. Murray is satisfied with its progress; and if the public are equally so with the perusal, there's an end of the matter.

Nine o'clock

Been to Hanson's on business. Saw Rogers, and had a note from Lady Melbourne, who says, it is said I am 'much out of spirits.' I wonder if I really am or not? I have certainly enough of 'that perilous

stuff which weighs upon the heart,' and it is better they should believe it to be the result of these attacks than of the real cause, but—ay, ay, always *but*, to the end of the chapter.

Hobhouse has told me ten thousand anecdotes of Napoleon, all good and true. My friend H. is the most entertaining of companions, and a fine fellow to boot.

Redde a little—wrote notes and letters, and am alone, which Locke says is bad company. 'Be not solitary, be not idle.'—Um!—the idleness is troublesome; but I can't see so much to regret in the solitude. The more I see of men, the less I like them. If I could but say so of women too, all would be well. Why can't I? I am now six-and-twenty; my passions have had enough to cool them; my affections more than enough to wither them,—and yet—and yet—always *yet* and *but*—'Excellent well, you are a fishmonger—get thee to a nunnery.'—'They fool me to the top of my bent.'

Midnight

Began a letter, which I threw into the fire. Redde—but to little purpose. Did not visit Hobhouse, as I promised and ought. No matter, the loss is mine. Smoked cigars.

Napoleon!—this week will decide his fate. All seems against him; but I believe and hope he will win—at least, beat back the invaders. What right have we to prescribe sovereigns to France? Oh for a Republic! 'Brutus, thou sleepest' Hobhouse abounds in continental anecdotes of this extraordinary man; all in favour of his intellect and courage, but against his *bonhomie*. No wonder;—how should he, who knows mankind well, do other than despise and abhor them?

The greater the equality, the more impartially evil is distributed, and becomes lighter by the division among so many—therefore, a Republic!

More notes from Madame de Stael unanswered—and so they shall remain. I admire her abilities, but really her society is overwhelming—an avalanche that buries one in glittering nonsense—all snow and sophistry.

Shall I go to Mackintosh's on Tuesday? um!—I did not go to Marquis Lansdowne's, nor to Miss Berry's, though both are pleasant. So is Sir James's,—but I don't know—I believe one is not the better for parties; at least, unless some *regnante* is there.

I wonder how the deuce any body could make such a world; for what purpose dandies, for instance, were ordained—and kings—and fellows of colleges—and women of 'a certain age'—and many men of any age—and myself, most of all!

*Divesne prisco natus ab Inacho
Nil interest, an pauper, et infimâ
De gente, sub dio moreris,
Victima nil miserantis Orci.
Omnes eodem cogimur, etc.*

Is there any thing beyond—*who* knows? *He* that can't tell. Who tells that there is? He who don't know. And when shall he know? perhaps, when he don't expect, and generally when he don't wish it. In this last respect, however, all are not alike: it depends a good deal upon education,—something upon nerves and habits—but most upon digestion.

Saturday, Feb. 19

Just returned from seeing Kean in Richard. By Jove, he is a soul! Life—nature—truth without exaggeration or diminution. Kemble's Hamlet is perfect;—but Hamlet is not Nature. Richard is a man; and Kean is Richard. Now to my own concerns.

'Went to Waite's. Teeth are all right and white; but he says that I grind them in my sleep and chip the edges. That same sleep is no friend of mine, though I court him sometimes for half the twenty-four.

February 20

Got up and tore out two leaves of this Journal—I don't know why. Hodgson just called and gone. He has much *bonhomie* with his other good qualities, and more talent than he has yet had credit for beyond his circle.

An invitation to dine at Holland House to meet Kean. He is worth meeting; and I hope, by getting into good society, he will be prevented from falling like Cooke. He is greater now on the stage, and off he should never be less. There is a stupid and underrating criticism upon him in one of the newspapers. I thought that, last night, though great, he rather under-acted more than the first time. This may be the effect of these cavils; but I hope he has more sense than to mind them. He cannot expect to maintain his present eminence, or to advance still higher, without the envy of his green-room fellows, and the nibbling of their admirers. But, if he don't beat them all, why then—merit hath no purchase in 'these coster-monger days.'

I wish that I had a talent for the drama; I would write a tragedy *now*. But no,—it is gone. Hodgson talks of one,—he will do it well;—and I think Moore should try. He has wonderful powers, and much variety; besides, he has lived and felt. To write so as to bring home to the heart, the heart must have been tried,—but, perhaps, ceased to be

so. While you are under the influence of passions, you only feel, but cannot describe them,—any more than, when in action, you could turn round and tell the story to your next neighbour! When all is over,—all, all, and irrevocable,—trust to memory—she is then but too faithful.

Went out, and answered some letters, yawned now and then, and redde the *Robbers*. Fine,—but *Fiesco* is better; and Alfieri and Monti's *Aristodemo* best. They are more equal than the Tedeschi dramatists.

Answered—or rather acknowledged—the receipt of young Reynolds's poem, *Sofie*. The lad is clever, but much of his thoughts are borrowed,—*whence*, the Reviewers may find out. I hate discouraging a young one; and I think,—though wild and more oriental than he would be, had he seen the scenes where he has placed his tale,—that he has much talent, and, certainly, fire enough.

Received a very singular epistle; and the mode of its conveyance, through Lord H.'s hands, as curious as the letter itself. But it was gratifying and pretty.

Sunday, February 27^r

Here I am, alone, instead of dining at Lord H.'s, where I was asked,—but not inclined to go any where. Hobhouse says I am growing a *loup garou*,—a solitary hobgoblin. True;—'I am myself alone.' The last week has been passed in reading—seeing plays—now and then visitors—sometimes yawning and sometimes sighing, but no writing,—save of letters. If I could always read, I should never feel the want of society. Do I regret it?—um!—'Man delights not me,' and only one woman—at a time.

There is something to me very softening in the presence of a woman,—some strange influence, even if one is not in love with them—which I cannot at all account for, having no very high opinion of the sex. But yet,—I always feel in better humour with myself and every thing else, if there is a woman within ken. Even Mrs. Mule, my fire-lighter,—the most ancient and withered of her kind,—and (except to myself) not the best-tempered—always makes me laugh,—no difficult task when I am 'i' the vein.'

Heigho! I would I were in mine island!—I am not well; and yet I look in good health. At times, I fear, 'I am not in my perfect mind;—and yet my heart and head have stood many a crash, and what should ail them now? They prey upon themselves, and I am sick—sick—'Prithee, undo this button—why should a cat, a rat, a dog have life—and *thou* no life at all?' Six-and-twenty years, as they call them, why, I might and should have been a Pasha by this time. 'I gin to be a-weary of the sun.'

Buonaparte is not yet beaten; but has rebutted Blucher, and repiqued Schwartzburg. This it is to have a head. If he again wins
Væ victis!

Sunday, March 6

On Tuesday last dined with Rogers,—Madame de Staël, Mackintosh, Sheridan, Erskine, and Payne Knight, Lady Donegal, and Miss R. there. Sheridan told a very good story of himself and Madame de Recamier's handkerchief; Erskine a few stories of himself only. *She* is going to write a big book about England, she says;—I believe her. Asked by her how I liked Miss Edgeworth's thing, called *Patronage*, and answered (very sincerely) that I thought it very bad for *her*, and worse than any of the others. Afterwards thought it possible Lady Donegal, being Irish, might be a patroness of Miss Edgeworth, and was rather sorry for my opinion, as I hate putting people into fusses, either with themselves or their favourites; it looks as if one did it on purpose. The party went off very well, and the fish was very much to my gusto. But we got up too soon after the women; and Mrs. Corinne always lingers so long after dinner that we wish her in—the drawing-room.

To-day Campbell called, and while sitting here in came Merivale. During our colloquy, C. (ignorant that Merivale was the writer) abused the 'mawkishness of the *Quarterly Review* of Grimm's *Correspondence*.' I (knowing the secret) changed the conversation as soon as I could; and C. went away, quite convinced of having made the most favourable impression on his new acquaintance. Merivale is luckily a very good-natured fellow, or God he knows what might have been engendered from such a malaprop. I did not look at him while this was going on, but I felt like a coal—for I like Merivale, as well as the article in question.

Asked to Lady Keith's to-morrow evening—I think I will go; but it is the first party invitation I have accepted this 'season,' as the learned Fletcher called it, when that youngest brat of Lady ——'s cut my eye and cheek open with a misdirected pebble—'Never mind, my Lord, the scar will be gone before the *season*;' as if one's eye was of no importance in the mean time.

Lord Erskine called, and gave me his famous pamphlet, with a marginal note and corrections in his handwriting. Sent it to be bound superbly, and shall treasure it.

Sent my fine print of Napoleon to be framed. It is framed; and the Emperor becomes his robes as if he had been hatched in them.

March 7

Rose at seven—ready by half-past eight—went to Mr. Hanson's, Bloomsbury Square—went to church with his eldest daughter, Mary Anne (a good girl), and gave her away to the Earl of Portsmouth. Saw her fairly a countess—congratulated the family and groom (bride)—drank a bumper of wine (wholesome sherris) to their felicity, and all that—and came home. Asked to stay to dinner, but could not. At three sat to Phillips for faces. Called on Lady Melbourne—I like her so well, that I always stay too long. (Mem. to mend of that.)

Passed the evening with Hobhouse, who has begun a poem, which promises highly;—wish he would go on with it. Heard some curious extracts from a life of Morosini, the blundering Venetian, who blew up the Acropolis at Athens with a bomb, and be damned to him! Waxed sleepy—just come home—must go to bed. and am engaged to meet Sheridan to-morrow at Rogers's.

Queen ceremony that same of marriage—saw many abroad, Greek and Catholic—one, at *home*, many years ago. There be some strange phrases in the prologue (the exhortation), which made me turn away, not to laugh in the face of the surpliceman. Made one blunder, when I joined the hands of the happy—rammed their left hands, by mistake, into one another. Corrected it—bustled back to the altar-rail, and said 'Amen.' Portsmouth responded as if he had got the whole by heart; and, if any thing, was rather before the priest. It is now midnight and . . .

March 10, *Thor's Day*

On Tuesday dined with Rogers,—Mackintosh, Sheridan, Sharpe,—much talk, and good,—all, except my own little prattlement. Much of old times—Horne Tooke—the Trials—evidence of Sheridan, and anecdotes of those times, when I, alas! was an infant. If I had been a man, I would have made an English Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

Set down Sheridan at Brookes's,—where, by the by, he could not have well set down himself, as he and I were the only drinkers. Sherry means to stand for Westminster, as Cochrane (the stock-jobbing hoaxer) must vacate. Brougham is a candidate. I fear for poor dear Sherry. Both have talents of the highest order, but the youngster has *yet* a character. We shall see, if he lives to Sherry's age, how he will pass over the redhot ploughshares of public life. I don't know why, but I hate to see the *old* ones lose, particularly Sheridan, notwithstanding all his *méchanceté*.

Received many, and the kindest, thanks from Lady Portsmouth,

père and mère, for my match-making. I don't regret it, as she looks the countess well, and is a very good girl. It is odd how well she carries her new honours. She looks a different woman, and high-bred, too. I had no idea that I could make so good a peeress.

Went to the play with Hobhouse. Mrs. Jordan superlative in Hoyerden, and Jones well enough in Foppington. *What plays!* what wit!—*hélas!* Congreve and Vanbrugh are your only comedy. Our society is too insipid now for the like copy. Would *not* go to Lady Keith's. Hobhouse thought it odd. I wonder *he* should like parties. If one is in love, and wants to break a commandment and covet any thing that is there, they do very well. But to go out amongst the mere herd, without a motive, pleasure, or pursuit—'sdeath! 'I'll none of it.' He told me an odd report,—that *I* am the actual Conrad, the veritable Corsair, and that part of my travels are supposed to have passed in privacy. Um!—people sometimes hit near the truth; but never the whole truth. H. don't know what I was about the year after he left the Levant; nor does any one—nor—nor—nor—however, it is a lie—but, 'I doubt the equivocation of the fiend that lies like truth!'

I shall have letters of importance to-morrow. Which —, —, or —? heigho! . . . — is in my heart, — in my head, — in my eye, and the *single* one, Heaven knows where. All write, and will be answered. 'Since I have crept in favour with myself, I must maintain it;' but *I* never 'mistook my person,' though I think others have.

— called to-day in great despair about his mistress, who has taken a freak of —. He began a letter to her, but was obliged to stop short—I finished it for him, and he copied and sent it. If *he* holds out, and keeps to my instructions of affected indifference, she will lower her colours. If she don't, he will, at least, get rid of her, and she don't seem much worth keeping. But the poor lad is in love—if that is the case, she will win. When they once discover their power, *finita è la musica.*

Sleepy, and must go to bed.

Tuesday, March 15.

Dined yesterday with Rogers, Mackintosh, and Sharpe. Sheridan could not come. Sharpe told several very amusing anecdotes of Henderson, the actor. Stayed till late, and came home, having drunk so much *tea*, that I did not get to sleep till six this morning. R. says I am to be in *this Quarterly*—cut up, I presume, as they 'hate us youth.' *N'importe.* As Sharpe was passing by the doors of some debating society (the Westminster Forum), in his way to dinner, he

saw rubricked on the walls *Scott's* name and *mine*—'Which the best poet?' being the question of the evening; and I suppose all the Templars and *would-be's* took our rhymes in vain in the course of the controversy. Which had the greater show of hands, I neither know nor care; but I feel the coupling of the names as a compliment,—though I think Scott deserves better company.

Wedderburn Webster called—Lord Erskine, Lord Holland, etc., etc. Wrote to — the *Corsair* report. She says she don't wonder, since 'Conrad is so *like*.' It is odd that one, who knows me so thoroughly, should tell me this to my face. However, if she don't know, nobody can.

Mackintosh is, it seems, the writer of the defensive letter in the *Morning Chronicle*. If so, it is very kind, and more than I did for myself.

Told Murray to secure for me Bandello's Italian Novels at the sale to-morrow. To me they will be *nuts*. Redde a satire on myself, called 'Anti-Byron,' and told Murray to publish it if he liked. The object of the author is to prove me an atheist and a systematic conspirator against law and government. Some of the verse is good; the prose I don't quite understand. He asserts that my 'deleterious works' have had 'an effect upon civil society, which requires,' etc., etc., etc., and his own poetry. It is a lengthy poem, and a long preface, with an harmonious title-page. Like the fly in the fable, I seem to have got upon a wheel which makes much dust; but, unlike the said fly, I do not take it all for my own raising.

A letter from *Bella*, which I answered. I shall be in love with her again, if I don't take care.

I shall begin a more regular system of reading soon.

Thursday, March 17

I have been sparring with Jackson for exercise this morning; and mean to continue and renew my acquaintance with the muffles. My chest, and arms, and wind are in very good plight, and I am not in flesh. I used to be a hard hitter, and my arms are very long for my height (5 feet 8½ inches). At any rate, exercise is good, and this the severest of all; fencing and the broad-sword never fatigued me half so much.

Redde the *Quarrels of Authors* (another sort of *sparring*)—a new work, by that most entertaining and researching writer, Israeli. They seem to be an irritable set, and I wish myself well out of it. 'I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat.' What the devil had

I to do with scribbling? It is too late to inquire, and all regret is useless. But, an it were to do again,—I should write again, I suppose. Such is human nature, at least my share of it;—though I shall think better of myself, if I have sense to stop now. If I have a wife, and that wife has a son—by any body—I will bring up mine heir in the most anti-poetical way—make him a lawyer, or a pirate, or—any thing. But, if he writes too, I shall be sure he is none of mine, and cut him off with a Bank token. Must write a letter—three o'clock.

Sunday, March 20

I intended to go to Lady Hardwicke's, but won't. I always begin the day with a bias towards going to parties; but, as the evening advances, my stimulus fails, and I hardly ever go out—and, when I do, always regret it. This might have been a pleasant one;—at least, the hostess is a very superior woman. Lady Lansdowne's to-morrow—Lady Heathcote's Wednesday. Um!—I must spur myself into going to some of them, or it will look like rudeness, and it is better to do as other people do—confound them!

Redde Machiavel, parts of Chardin, and Sismondi, and Bandello—by starts. Redde the *Edinburgh*, 44, just come out. In the beginning of the article on Edgeworth's *Patronage*, I have gotten a high compliment, I perceive. Whether this is creditable to me, I know not; but it does honour to the editor, because he once abused me. Many a man will retract praise; none but a high-spirited mind will revoke its censure, or *can* praise the man it has once attacked. I have often, since my return to England, heard Jeffrey most highly commended by those who know him for things independent of his talents. I admire him for *this*—not because he has *praised me* (I have been so praised elsewhere and abused, alternately, that mere habit has rendered me as indifferent to both as a man at twenty-six can be to any thing), but because he is, perhaps, the *only man* who, under the relations in which he and I stand, or stood, with regard to each other, would have had the liberality to act thus; none but a great soul dared hazard it. The height on which he stands has not made him giddy;—a little scribbler would have gone on cavilling to the end of the chapter. As to the justice of his panegyric, that is matter of taste. There are plenty to question it, and glad, too of the opportunity.

Lord Erskine called to-day. He means to carry down his reflections on the war—or rather wars—to the present day. I trust that he will. Must send to Mr. Murray to get the binding of my copy of his pamphlet finished, as Lord E. has promised me to correct it, and add

some marginal notes to it. Any thing in his handwriting will be a treasure, which will gather compound interest from years. Erskine has high expectations of Mackintosh's promised History. Undoubtedly it must be a classic, when finished.

Sparred with Jackson again yesterday morning, and shall to-morrow. I feel all the better for it, in spirits, though my arms and shoulders are very stiff from it. Mem. to attend the pugilistic dinner:—Marquess Huntley is in the chair.

Lord Erskine thinks that ministers must be in peril of going out. So much the better for him. To me it is the same who are in or out:—we want something more than a change of ministers, and some day we will have it.

I remember, in riding from Chrisso to Castri (Delphos), along the sides of Parnassus, I saw six eagles in the air. It is uncommon to see so many together; and it was the number—not the species, which is common enough—that excited my attention.

The last bird I ever fired at was an *eaglet*, on the shore of the Gulf of Lepanto, near Vostitza. It was only wounded, and I tried to save it, the eye was so bright; but it pined, and died in a few days: and I never did since, and never will, attempt the death of another bird. I wonder what put these two things into my head just now? I have been reading Sismondi, and there is nothing there that could induce the recollection.

I am mightily taken with Braccio di Montone, Giovanni Galeazzo, and Eccelino. But the last is *not* Bracciaferro (of the same name), Count of Ravenna, whose history I want to trace. There is a fine engraving in Lavater, from a picture by Fuseli, of *that* Ezzelin, over the body of Meduna, punished by him for a *hitch* in her constancy during his absence in the Crusades. He was right—but I want to know the story.

Tuesday, March 22

Last night, *party* at Lansdowne House. To-night, *party* at Lady Charlotte Greville's—deplorable waste of time, and something of temper. Nothing imparted—nothing acquired—talking without ideas:—if any thing like *thought* in my mind, it was not on the subjects on which we were gabbling. Heigho!—and in this way half London pass what is called life. To-morrow there is Lady Heathcote's—shall I go? yes—to punish myself for not having a pursuit.

Let me see—what did I see? The only person who much struck me was Lady Stafford's eldest daughter, Lady Charlotte Leveson. They say she is *not* pretty. I don't know—every thing is pretty that

pleases; but there is an air of *soul* about her—and her colour changes—and there is that shyness of the antelope (which I delight in) in her manner so much, that I observed her more than I did any other woman in the rooms, and only looked at anything else when I thought she might perceive and feel embarrassed by my scrutiny. After all, there may be something of association in this. She is a friend of Augusta's, and whatever she loves I can't help liking.

Her mother, the Marchioness, talked to me a little; and I was twenty times on the point of asking her to introduce me to *sa fille*, but I stopped short. This comes of that affray with the Carlises.

Earl Grey told me laughingly of a paragraph in the last *Moniteur*, which has stated, among other symptoms of rebellion, some particulars of the *sensation* occasioned in all our government gazettes by the 'tear' lines,—*only* amplifying, in its re-statement, an epigram (by the by, no epigram except in the *Greek* acceptance of the word) into a *roman*. I wonder the *Couriers*, etc., etc., have not translated that part of the *Moniteur*, with additional comments.

The Princess of Wales has requested Fuseli to paint from *The Corsair*,—leaving to him the choice of any passage for the subject: so Mr. Locke tells me. Tired, jaded, selfish, and supine—must go to bed.

Roman, at least, *Romance*, means a song sometimes, as in the Spanish. I suppose this is the *Moniteur's* meaning, unless he has confused it with *The Corsair*.

Albany, March 28

This night got into my new apartments, rented of Lord Althorpe, on a lease of seven years. Spacious, and room for my books and sabres. *In the house*; too, another advantage. The last few days, or whole week, have been very abstemious, regular in exercise, and yet very *unwell*.

Yesterday, dined *tête-à-tête* at the Cocoa with Scrope Davies—sat from six till midnight—drank between us one bottle of champagne and six of claret, neither of which wines ever affect me. Offered to take Scrope home in my carriage; but he was tipsy and pious, and I was obliged to leave him on his knees praying to I know not what purpose or pagod. No headach, nor sickness, that night nor to-day. Got up, if any thing, earlier than usual—sparred with Jackson *ad sudorem*, and have been much better in health than for many days. I have heard nothing more from Scrope. Yesterday paid him four thousand eight hundred pounds, a debt of some standing, and which I wished to have paid before. My mind is much relieved by the removal of that *débit*.

Augusta wants me to make it up with Carlisle. I have refused every body else, but I can't deny her any thing;—so I must e'en do it, though I had as lief 'drink up Eisel—eat a crocodile.' Let me see—Ward, the Hollands, the Lambs, Rogers, etc., etc.,—every body, more or less, have been trying for the last two years to accommodate this *complet* quarrel, to no purpose. I shall laugh if Augusta succeeds.

Redde a little of many things—shall get in all my books to-morrow. Luckily this room will hold them—with 'ample room and verge, etc., the characters of hell to trace.' I must set about some employment soon; my heart begins to eat *itself* again.

April 8

Out of town six days. On my return, find my poor little paged, Napoleon, pushed off his pedestal;—the thieves are in Paris. It is his own fault. Like Milo, he would rend the oak; but it closed again, wedged his hands, and now the beasts—lion, bear, down to the dirtiest jackal—may all tear him. That Muscovite winter *wedged* his arms;—ever since, he has fought with his feet and teeth. The last may still leave their marks; and 'I guess now' (as the Yankees say) that he will yet play them a pass. He is in their rear—between them and their homes. Query—will they ever reach them?

Saturday, April 9, 1814

I mark this day!

Napoleon Buonaparte has abdicated the throne of the world. 'Excellent well.' Methinks Sylla did better; for he revenged and resigned in the height of his sway, red with the slaughter of his foes—the finest instance of glorious contempt of the rascals upon record. Dioclesian did well too—Amurath not amiss, had he become aught except a dervise—Charles the Fifth but so so—but Napoleon, worst of all. What! wait till they were in his capital, and then talk of his readiness to give up what is already gone!! 'What whining monk art thou—what holy cheat?' 'Sdeath!—Dionysius at Corinth was yet a king to this. The 'Isle of Elba' to retire to!—Well—if it had been Caprea, I should have marvelled less. 'I see men's minds are but a parcel of their fortunes.' I am utterly bewildered and confounded.

I don't know—but I think I, even I (an insect compared with this creature), have set my life on casts not a millionth part of this man's. But, after all, a crown may be not worth dying for. Yet, to outlive *Lodi* for this!!! Oh that Juvenal or Johnson could rise from the dead! *Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies?* I knew they were light in the balance of mortality; but I thought their living dust weighed more *carats*. Alas! this imperial diamond hath a flaw in it, and is now

hardly fit to stick in a glazier's pencil:—the pen of the historian won't rate it worth a ducat.

Psha! 'something too much of this.' But I won't give him up even now; though all his admirers have, 'like the thanes, fallen from him.'

April 10

I do not know that I am happiest when alone; but this I am sure of, that I never am long in the society even of *her* I love, (God knows too well, and the devil probably too), without a yearning for the company of my lamp and my utterly confused and tumbled-over library. Even in the day, I send away my carriage oftener than I use or abuse it. *Per esempio*,—I have not stirred out of these rooms for these four days past: but I have sparred for exercise (windows open) with Jackson an hour daily, to attenuate and keep up the ethereal part of me. The more violent the fatigue, the better my spirits for the rest of the day; and then, my evenings have that calm nothingness of languor, which I most delight in. To-day I have boxed an hour—written an ode to Napoleon Buonaparte—copied it—eaten six biscuits—drunk four bottles of soda water—redded away the rest of my time—besides giving poor —— a world of advice about this mistress of his, who is plaguing him into a phthisic and intolerable tediousness. I am a pretty fellow truly to lecture about 'the sect.' No matter, my counsels are all thrown away.

April 19, 1814

There is ice at both poles, north and south—all extremes are the same—misery belongs to the highest and the lowest only,—to the emperor and the beggar, when unsuspended and unthroned. There is, to be sure, a damned insipid medium—an equinoctial line—no one knows where, except upon maps and measurement.

*And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.*

I will keep no further journal of that same hesternal torchlight; and, to prevent me from returning, like a dog, to the vomit of memory, I tear out the remaining leaves of this volume, and write, in *Ipecacuanha*,—'that the Bourbons are restored!!!'—'Hang up philosophy.' To be sure, I have long despised myself and man, but I never spat in the face of my species before—'O fool! I shall go mad.'

A JOURNAL¹

Clarens, Sept. 18, 1816

Yesterday September 17th, 1816—I set out (with H[obhouse]) on an excursion of some days to the Mountains. I shall keep a short journal of each day's progress for my Sister Augusta.

Sept. 17th

Rose at five; left Diodati about seven, in one of the country carriages (a Charaban), our servants on horseback: weather very fine; the Lake calm and clear; Mont Blanc and the Aiguille of Argentières both very distinct; the borders of the Lake beautiful. Reached Lausanne before Sunset; stopped and slept at Ouchy.

H. went to dine with a Mr. Okeden. I remained at our Caravansera (though invited to the house of H.'s friend—too lazy or tired, or something else, to go), and wrote a letter to Augusta. Went to bed at nine—sheets damp: swore and stripped them off and flung them—Heaven knows where: wrapt myself up in the blankets, and slept like a child of a month's existence till 5 o'Clock of

Sept. 18th

Called by Berger (my Courier who acts as Valet for a day or two, the learned Fletcher being left in charge of Chattels at Diodati): got up. H. walked on before. A mile from Lausanne the road overflowed by the lake; got on horseback and rode till within a mile of Vevay. The Colt young, but went very well; overtook H., and resumed the carriage, which is an open one. Stopped at Vevay two hours (the second time I had visited it); walked to the church; view from the Churchyard superb; within it General Ludlow's (the Regicide's) monument—black marble—long inscription—Latin, but simple, particularly the latter part, in which his wife (Margaret de Thomas) records her long, her tried, and unshaken affection; he was an *Exile two and thirty years*—one of King's (Charles's) Judges—a fine fellow. I remember reading his memoirs in January 1815 (at Halmaby)—the first part of them very amusing, the latter less so; I little thought, at the time of their perusal by me, of seeing his tomb. Near him Broughton (who read King Charles's sentence to Charles Stuart) is buried, with a queer and rather canting, but still a Republican, epitaph. Ludlow's house shown; it retains still its inscription—*Omnis*

¹ This Journal was kept for the benefit of Mrs. Leigh, to whom Byron had bidden farewell on Easter Sunday, April 14th, 1816.

solum forti patria. Walked down to the Lake side; servants, Carriage, saddle-horses—all set off and left us *plantés là* by some mistake; and we walked on after them towards Clarens: H—— ran on before, and overtook them at last. Arrived the second time (1st time was by water) at Clarens, beautiful Clarens! Went to Chillon through Scenery worthy of I know not whom; went over the Castle of Chillon again. On our return met an English party in a carriage; a lady in it fast asleep!—fast asleep in the most anti-narcotic spot in the world—excellent! I remember, at Chamouni, in the very eyes of Mont Blanc, hearing another woman, English also, exclaim to her party ‘did you ever see any thing more *rural*?’—as if it was Highgate, or Hampstead, or Brompton, or Hayes,—‘*Rural*!’ quotha!—Rocks, pines, torrents, Glaciers, Clouds and Summits of eternal snow far above them—and ‘*Rural*!’ I did not know the thus exclaiming fair one, but she was a very good kind of a woman.

After a slight and short dinner, we visited the Château de Clarens; an English woman has rented it recently (it was not let when I saw it first); the roses are gone with their Summer; the family out, but the servants desired us to walk over the interior of the mansion. Saw on the table of the saloon Blair’s sermons and somebody else’s (I forget who’s) sermons, and a set of noisy children. Saw all worth seeing, and then descended to the ‘Bosquet de Julie,’ etc., etc.; our guide full of *Rousseau*, whom he is eternally confounding with *St. Preux*, and mixing the man and the book. On the steps of a cottage in the village, I saw a young *paysanne*, beautiful as Julie herself. Went again as far as Chillon to revisit the little torrent from the hill behind it. Sunset reflected in the lake. Have to get up at 5 to-morrow to cross the mountains on horseback—carriage to be sent round; lodged at my old Cottage—hospitable and comfortable; tired with a longish ride on the Colt, and the subsequent jolting of the Charaban, and my scramble in the hot sun. Shall go to bed, thinking of you, dearest Augusta.

Mem. The Corporal who showed the wonders of Chillon was as drunk as Blucher, and (to my mind) as great a man. He was deaf also, and thinking every one else so, roared out the legends of the castle so fearfully that H. got out of humour. However, we saw things from the Gallows to the Dungeons (the *Potence* and the *Cachots*), and returned to Clarens with more freedom than belonged to the 15th Century.

September 19

At Clarens—the only book (except the Bible), a translation of ‘*Cecilia*’ (Miss Burney’s *Cecilia*); and the owner of the Cottage had

also called her dog (a fat Pug ten years old, and hideous as *Tip*) after Cecilia's (or rather Delville's) dog, Fidde.

Rose at five: order the carriage round. Crossed the mountains to Montbovon on horseback, and on Mules, and, by dint of scrambling on foot also; the whole route beautiful as a Dream, and now to me almost as indistinct. I am so tired; for though healthy, I have not the strength I possessed but a few years ago. At Mont Davant we breakfasted; afterwards, on a steep ascent dismounted, tumbled down, and cut a finger open; the baggage also got loose and fell down a ravine, till stopped by a large tree; swore; recovered baggage; horse tired and dropping; mounted Mule. At the approach of the summit of Dent Jamant dismounted again with H. and all the party. Arrived at a lake in the very nipple of the bosom of the Mountain; left our quadrupeds with a Shepherd, and ascended further; came to some snow in patches, upon which my forehead's perspiration fell like rain, making the same dints as in a sieve; the chill of the wind and the snow turned me giddy, but I scrambled on and upwards. H. went to the highest *pinnacle*; I did not, but paused within a few yards (at an opening of the Cliff). In coming down, the Guide tumbled three times; I fell a laughing, and tumbled too—the descent luckily soft, though steep and slippery: H. also fell, but nobody hurt. The whole of the Mountain superb. A Shepherd on a very steep and high cliff playing upon his *pipe*; very different from *Arcadia*, (where I saw the pastors with a long Musquet instead of a Crook, and pistols in their Girdles). Our Swiss Shepherd's pipe was sweet, and his tune agreeable. Saw a cow strayed; am told that they often break their necks on and over the crags. Descended to Montbovon; pretty scraggy village, with a wild river and a wooden bridge. H. went to fish—caught one. Our carriage not come; our horses, mules, etc. knocked up; ourselves fatigued; but so much the better—I shall sleep.

The view from the highest points of to-day's journey comprized on one side the greatest part of Lake Lemán; on the other, the valleys and mountains of the Canton of Fribourg, and an immense plain, with the Lakes of Neuchâtel and Morat, and all which the borders of these and of the Lake of Geneva inherit; we had both sides of the Jura before us in one point of view, with Alps in plenty. In passing a ravine, the Guide recommended strenuously a quickening of pace, as the Stones fall with great rapidity and occasional damage; the advice is excellent, but, like most good advice, impracticable, the road being so rough in this precise point, that neither mules, nor mankind, nor horses, can make any violent progress. Passed without fractures or menace thereof.

The music of the Cows' bells (for their wealth, like the Patriarchs', is cattle) in the pastures, (which reach to a height far above any mountains in Britain), and the Shepherds' shouting to us from crag to crag, and playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery, realized all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence:—much more so than Greece or Asia Minor, for there we are a little too much of the sabre and musquet order; and if there is a Crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other:—but this was pure and unmixed—solitary, savage, and patriarchal: the effect I cannot describe. As we went, they played the 'Ranz des Vaches' and other airs, by way of farewell. I have lately repeopled my mind with Nature.

September 20

Up at 6. Off at 8. The whole of this day's journey at an average of between from 2700 to 3000 feet above the level of the Sea. This valley, the longest, narrowest, and considered the finest of the Alps, little traversed by travellers. Saw the bridge of La Roche. The bed of the river very low and deep, between immense rocks, and rapid as anger:—a man and mule said to have tumbled over without damage (the mule was lucky at any rate: unless I knew the *man*, I should be loth to pronounce *him* fortunate). The people looked free, and happy, and *rich* (which last implies neither of the former); the cows superb; a Bull nearly leapt into the Charaban—'agreeable companion in a post-chaise'; Goats and Sheep very thriving. A mountain with enormous Glaciers to the right—the Kletsgerberg; further on, the Hockthorn—nice names—so soft!—Hockthorn, I believe, very lofty and craggy, patched with snow only; no Glaciers on it, but some good epaulettes of clouds.

Passed the boundaries, out of Vaud and into Bern Canton; French exchanged for a bad German; the district famous for Cheese, liberty, property, and no taxes. H. went to fish—caught none. Strolled to river; saw boy and kid; kid followed him like a dog; kid could not get over a fence, and bleated piteously; tried myself to help kid, but nearly upset both self and kid into the river. Arrived here about six in the evening. Nine o'clock—going to bed. H. in next room knocked his head against the door, and exclaimed of course against doors; not tired to-day, but hope to sleep nevertheless. Women gabbling below: read a French translation of Schiller. Good Night, Dearest Augusta.

September 21

Off early. The valley of Simmenthal, as before. Entrance to the

plain of Thoun very narrow; high rocks, wooded to the top; river; new mountains, with fine Glaciers. Lake of Thoun; extensive plain with a girdle of Alps. Walked down to the Château de Schadau; view along the lake; crossed the river in a boat rowed by women. . . . Thoun a very pretty town. The whole day's journey Alpine and proud.

September 22

Left Thoun in a boat, which carried us the length of the lake in three hours. The lake small; but the banks fine: rocks down to the water's edge. Landed at Neuhause; passed Interlachen; entered upon a range of scenes beyond all description or previous conception. Passed a rock; inscription—2 brothers—one murdered the other; just the place for it. After a variety of windings came to an enormous rock. Girl with fruit—very pretty; blue eyes, good teeth, very fair: long but good features—reminded me rather of Fy. Bought some of her pears, and patted her upon the cheek; the expression of her face very mild, but good, and not at all coquettish. Arrived at the foot of the Mountain (the Yung frau, *i.e.* the Maiden); Glaciers; torrents; one of these torrents *nine hundred feet* in height of visible descent. Lodged at the Curate's. Set out to see the Valley; heard an Avalanche fall, like thunder; saw Glacier—enormous. Storm came on, thunder, lightning, hail; all in perfection, and beautiful. I was on horseback; Guide wanted to carry my cane; I was going to give it him, when I recollected that it was a Swordstick, and I thought the lightning might be attracted towards him; kept it myself; a good deal encumbered with it, and my cloak, as it was too heavy for a whip, and the horse was stupid, and stood still with every other peal. Got in, not very wet; the Cloak being staunch. H. wet through; H. took refuge in cottage; sent man, umbrella, and cloak (from the Curate's when I arrived) after him. Swiss Curate's house very good indeed,—much better than most English Vicarages. It is immediately opposite the torrent I spoke of. The torrent is in shape curving over the rock, like the tail of a white horse streaming in the wind, such as it might be conceived would be that of the '*pale horse*' on which *Death* is mounted in the Apocalypse. It is neither mist nor water, but a something between both; it's immense height (nine hundred feet) gives it a wave, a curve, a spreading here, a condensation there, wonderful and indescribable. I think, upon the whole, that this day has been better than any of this present excursion.

September 23

Before ascending the mountain, went to the torrent (7 in the morning) again; the Sun upon it forming a *rainbow* of the lower part of all colours, but principally purple and gold; the bow moving as you move; I never saw any thing like this; it is only in the Sunshine. Ascended the Wengen Mountain; at noon reached a valley on the summit; left the horses, took off my coat, and went to the summit, 7000 feet (English feet) above the level of the *sea*, and about 5000 above the valley we left in the morning. On one side, our view comprized the *Yung frau*, with all her glaciers; then the *Dent d'Argent* shining like truth; then the *little Giant* (the Kleiner Eigher); and the great Giant (the Grosser Eigher), and last, not least, the Wetterhorn. The height of Jungfrau is 13,000 feet above the sea, 11,000 above the valley; she is the highest of this range. Heard the Avalanches falling every five minutes nearly—as if God was pelting the Devil down from Heaven with snow balls. From where we stood, on the *Wengen* Alp, we had all these in view on one side; on the other, the clouds rôse from the opposite valley, curling up perpendicular precipices like the foam of the Ocean of Hell, during a Spring tide—it was white, and sulphury, and immeasurably deep in appearance. The side we ascended was (of course) not of so precipitous a nature; but on arriving at the summit, we looked down the other side upon a boiling sea of cloud, dashing against the crags on which we stood (these crags on one side quite perpendicular). Staid a quarter of an hour; began to descend; quite clear from cloud on that side of the mountain. In passing the masses of snow, I made a snowball and pelted H. with it.

Got down to our horses again; eat something; remounted; heard the Avalanches still; came to a morass; H. dismounted; H. got over well; I tried to pass my horse over; the horse sunk up [to] the chin, and of course he and I were in the mud together; bemired all over, but not hurt; laughed, and rode on. Arrived at the Grindenwald; dined, mounted again, and rode to the higher Glacier—twilight, but distinct—very fine Glacier, like a *frozen hurricane*. Starlight, beautiful, but a devil of a path! Never mind, got safe in; a little lightning; but the whole of the day as fine in point of weather as the day on which Paradise was made. Passed *whole woods of withered pines, all withered*; trunks stripped and barkless, branches lifeless; done by a single winter,—their appearance reminded me of me and my family.

September 24

Set off at seven; up at five. Passed the black Glacier, the Mountain Wetterhorn on the right; crossed the Scheideck mountain; came to the Rose glacier, said to be the largest and finest in Switzerland. I think the Bossons Glacier at Chamouni as fine; H. does not. Came to the Reichenback waterfall, two hundred feet high; halted to rest the horses. Arrived in the valley of Oberhasli; rain came on; drenched a little; only 4 hours' rain, however, in 8 days. Came to Lake of Brienz, then to town of Brienz; changed. H. hurt his head against door. In the evening, four Swiss Peasant Girls of Oberhasli came and sang the airs of their country; two of the voices beautiful—the tunes also: they sing too that *Tyrolese air* and song which you love, Augusta, because I love it—and I love, because you love it; they are still singing. Dearest, you do not know how I should have liked this, were you with me. The airs are so wild and original, and at the same time of great sweetness. The singing is over: but below stairs I hear the notes of a Fiddle, which bode no good to my night's rest. The Lord help us—I shall go down and see the dancing.

September 25

The whole town of Brienz were apparently gathered together in the rooms below; pretty music and excellent Waltzing; none but peasants; the dancing much better than in England; the English can't Waltz, never could, nor ever will. One man with his pipe in his mouth, but danced as well as the others; some other dances in pairs and in fours, and very good. I went to bed, but the revelry continued below late and early. Brienz but a village. Rose early. Embarked on the Lake of Brienz, rowed by the women in a long boat; (one very young and very pretty—seated myself by her, and began to row also): presently we put to shore, and another woman jumped in. It seems it is the custom here for the boats to be *manned by women*: for of five men and three women in our bark, all the women took an oar, and but one man.

Got to Interlachen in three hours; pretty lake, not so large as that of Thoun. Dined at Interlachen. Girl gave me some flowers, and made me a speech in German, of which I know nothing: I do not know whether the speech was pretty, but as the woman was, I hope so. Saw another—very pretty too, and tall, which I prefer: I hate short women, for more reasons than one. Re-embarked on the lake of Thoun; fell asleep part of the way: sent our horses round; found people on the shore, blowing up a rock with gunpowder: they blew it up near our boat, only telling us a minute before:—mere stupidity,

but they might have broke our noddles. Got to Thoun in the Evening; the weather has been tolerable the whole day; but as the wild part of our tour is finished, it don't matter to us; in all the desirable part, we have been most lucky in warmth and clearness of Atmosphere, for which 'Praise we the Lord!!'

September 26

Being out of the mountains, my journal must be as flat as my journey. From Thoun to Bern, good road; hedges, villages, industry, property, and all sorts of tokens of insipid civilisation. From Bern to Fribourg; different Canton—Catholics; passed a field of Battle; Swiss beat the French in one of the late wars against the French Republic. Bought a dog—a very ugly dog, but '*très méchant*'; this was his great recommendation in the owner's eyes and mine, for I mean him to watch the carriage. He hath no tail, and is called '*Mutz*', which signifies '*Short-tail*': he is apparently of the Shepherd dog genus! The greater part of this tour has been on horseback, on foot, and on mule.

The Filly (which is one of the two young horses I bought of the Baron de Vincy), carried me very well: she is young and as quiet as any thing of her sex can be—very good tempered, and perpetually neighing when she wants any thing, which is every five minutes. I have called her *Biche*, because her manners are not unlike a little dog's; but she is a very tame pretty childish quadruped.

September 28

Saw the tree planted in honour of the battle of Morat; 340 years old; a good deal decayed. Left Fribourg, but first saw the Cathedral; high tower. Overtook the baggage of the Nuns of La Trappe, who are removing to Normandy from their late abode in the Canton of Fribourg; afterwards a coach, with a quantity of Nuns in it—Nuns old. Proceeded along the banks of the Lake of Neufchâtel; very pleasing and soft, but not so mountainous—at least, the Jura, not appearing so, after the Bernese Alps. Reached Yverdun in the dusk; a long line of large trees on the border of the lake—fine and sombre; the Auberge nearly full—a German—with princess and suite; got rooms. . . .

We hope to reach Diodati the day after tomorrow, and I wish for a letter from you, my own dearest Sis. May your sleep be soft, and your dreams of me. I am going to bed—good night.

September 29

Passed through a fine and flourishing country, but not mountainous. In the evening reached Aubonne (the entrance and bridge something like that of Durham), which commands by far the fairest view of the Lake of Geneva; twilight; the Moon on the Lake; a grove on the height, and of very noble trees. Here Tavernier (the eastern traveller) bought (or built) the Château, because the site resembled and equalled that of *Erivan* (a frontier city of Persia); here he finished his voyages, and I this little excursion,—for I am within a few hours of Diodati, and have little more to see, and no more to say.

In the weather for this tour (of 13 days), I have been very fortunate—fortunate in a companion (Mr. He.)—fortunate in our prospects, and exempt from even the little petty accidents and delays which often render journeys in a less wild country disappointing. I was disposed to be pleased. I am a lover of Nature and an admirer of Beauty. I can bear fatigue and welcome privation, and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. But in all this—the recollections of bitterness, and more especially of recent and more home desolation, which must accompany me through life, have preyed upon me here; and neither the music of the Shepherd, the crashing of the Avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the Glacier, the Forest, nor the Cloud, have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the Glory, around, above, and beneath me.

I am past reproaches; and there is a time for all things. I am past the wish of vengeance, and I know of none like for what I have suffered; but the hour will come, when what I feel must be felt, and the—but enough.

To you, dearest Augusta, I send, and for you I have kept this record of what I have seen and felt. Love me as you are beloved by me.

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY

Ravenna, January 4, 1821

'A sudden thought strikes me.' Let me begin a Journal once more. The last I kept was in Switzerland, in record of a tour made in the Bernese Alps, which I made to send to my sister in 1816, and I suppose that she has it still, for she wrote to me that she was pleased

with it. Another, and longer, I kept in 1813-1814, which I gave to Thomas Moore in the same year.

This morning I gat me up late, as usual—weather bad—bad as England—worse. The snow of last week melting to the sirocco of to-day, so that there were two damned things at once. Could not even get to ride on horseback in the forest. Stayed at home all the morning—looked at the fire—wondered when the post would come. Post came at the Ave Maria, instead of half-past one o'clock, as it ought. Galignani's *Messengers*, six in number—a letter from Faenza, but none from England. Very sulky in consequence (for there ought to have been letters), and ate in consequence a copious dinner; for when I am vexed, it makes me swallow quicker—but drank very little.

I was out of spirits—read the papers—thought what *fame* was, on reading, in a case of murder, that 'Mr. Wych, grocer, at Tunbridge, sold some bacon, flour, cheese, and, it is believed, some plums, to some gipsy woman accused. He had on his counter (I quote faithfully) a *book*, the Life of *Pamela*, which he was *tearing* for waste paper, etc. etc. In the cheese was found, etc. and a *leaf* of *Pamela* wrapt round the *bacon*.' What would Richardson, the vainest and luckiest of *living* authors (*i.e.* while alive)—he who, with Aaron Hill, used to prophesy and chuckle over the presumed fall of Fielding (the *prose* Homer of human nature) and of Pope (the most beautiful of poets)—what would he have said, could he have traced his pages from their place on the French prince's toilets (see Boswell's Johnson) to the grocer's counter and the gipsy-murderess's bacon!!!

What would he have said? What can any body say, save what Solomon said long before us? After all, it is but passing from one counter to another, from the bookseller's to the other tradesman's—grocer or pastry-cook. For my part, I have met with most poetry upon trunks; so that I am apt to consider the trunk-maker as the sexton of authorship.

Wrote five letters in about half an hour, short and savage, to all my rascally correspondents. Carriage came. Heard the news of three murders at Faenza and Forli—a carabinier, a smuggler, and an attorney—all last night. The two first in a quarrel, the latter by premeditation.

Three weeks ago—almost a month—the 7th it was—I picked up the commandant, mortally wounded, out of the street; he died in my house; assassins unknown, but presumed political. His brethren wrote from Rome last night to thank me for having assisted him in his last moments. Poor fellow! it was a pity; he was a good soldier,

but imprudent. It was eight in the evening when they killed him. We heard the shot; my servants and I ran out, and found him expiring, with five wounds, two whereof mortal—by slugs they seemed. I examined him, but did not go to the dissection next morning.

Carriage at 8 or so—went to visit La Contessa G.—found her playing on the piano-forte—talked till ten, when the Count, her father, and the no less Count, her brother, came in from the theatre. Play, they said, Alfieri's *Fileppo*—well received.

Two days ago the King of Naples passed through Bologna on his way to congress. My servant Luigi brought the news. I had sent him to Bologna for a lamp. How will it end? Time will show.

Came home at eleven, or rather before. If the road and weather are comfortable, mean to ride to-morrow. High time—almost a week at this work—snow, sirocco, one day—frost and snow the other—sad climate for Italy. But the two seasons, last and present, are extraordinary. Read a Life of Leonardo da Vinci by Rossi—ruminated—wrote this much, and will go to bed.

January 5, 1821

Rose late—dull and drooping—the weather dripping and dense. Snow on the ground, and sirocco above in the sky, like yesterday. Roads up to the horse's belly, so that riding (at least for pleasure) is not very feasible. Added a postscript to my letter to Murray. Read the conclusion, for the fiftieth time (I have read all W. Scott's novels at least fifty times), of the third series of *Tales of my Landlord*,—grand work—Scotch Fielding, as well as great English poet—wonderful man! I long to get drunk with him.

Dined *versus* six o' the clock. Forgot that there was a plum-pudding, (I have added, lately, *eating* to my 'family of vices,') and had dined before I knew it. Drank half a bottle of some sort of spirits—probably spirits of wine; for what they call brandy, rum, etc. etc. here is nothing but spirits of wine, coloured accordingly. Did *not* eat two apples, which were placed by way of dessert. Fed the two cats, the hawk, and the tame (but *not tamed*) crow. Read Mitford's *History of Greece*—Xenophon's *Retreat of the Ten Thousand*. Up to this present moment writing, 6 minutes before eight o' the clock—French hours, not Italian.

Hear the carriage—order pistols and great coat, as usual—necessary articles. Weather cold—carriage open, and inhabitants somewhat savage—rather treacherous and highly inflamed by politics. Fine fellows, though—good materials for a nation. Out of chaos God made a world, and out of high passions comes a people.

Clock strikes—going out to make love. Somewhat perilous, but not disagreeable. Memorandum—a new screen put up to-day. It is rather antique, but will do with a little repair.

Thaw continues—hopeful that riding may be practicable to-morrow. Sent the papers to All^l.—grand events coming.

11 o' the clock and nine minutes. Visited La Contessa G[uiccioli] nata G[hisleri] G[amba]. Found her beginning my letter of answer to the thanks of Alessio del Pinto of Rome for assisting his brother the late Commandant in his last moments, as I had begged her to pen my reply for the purer Italian, I being an ultramontane, little skilled in the set phrase of Tuscany. Cut short the letter—finish it another day. Talked of Italy, patriotism, Alfieri, Madame Albany, and other branches of learning. Also Sallust's *Conspiracy of Catiline*, and the *War of Jugurtha*. At 9 came in her brother, Il Conte Pietro—at 10, her father, Conte Ruggiero.

Talked of various modes of warfare—of the Hungarian and Highland modes of broad-sword exercise, in both whereof I was once a moderate 'master of fence.' Settled that the R. will break out on the 7th or 8th of March, in which appointment I should trust, had it not been settled that it was to have broken out in October, 1820. But those Bolognese shirked the Romagnuoles.

'It is all one to Ranger.' One must not be particular, but take rebellion when it lies in the way. Come home—read the *Ten Thousand* again, and will go to bed.

Mem.—Ordered Fletcher (at four o'clock this afternoon) to copy out seven or eight apophthegms of Bacon, in which I have detected such blunders as a schoolboy might detect rather than commit. Such are the sages! What must they be, when such as I can stumble on their mistakes or misstatements? I will go to bed, for I find that I grow cynical.

January 6, 1821

Mist—thaw—slop—rain. No stirring out on horseback. Read Spence's *Anecdotes*. Pope a fine fellow—always thought him so. Corrected blunders in nine apophthegms of Bacon—all historical—and read Mitford's *Greece*. Wrote an epigram. Turned to a passage in Guinguené—ditto in Lord Holland's *Lope de Vega*. Wrote a note on *Don Juan*.

At eight went out to visit. Heard a little music—like music. Talked with Count Pietro G. of the Italian comedian Vestris, who is now at Rome—have seen him often act in Venice—a good actor—very. Somewhat of a mannerist; but excellent in broad comedy, as well as in the sentimental pathetic. He has made me frequently laugh and

cry, neither of which is now a very easy matter—at least, for a player to produce in me.

Thought of the state of women under the ancient Greeks—convenient enough. Present state a remnant of the barbarism of the chivalric and feudal ages—artificial and unnatural. They ought to mind house—and be well fed and clothed—but not mixed in society. Well educated, too, in religion—but to read neither poetry nor politics—nothing but books of piety and cookery. Music—drawing—dancing—also a little gardening and ploughing now and then. I have seen them mending the roads in Epirus with good success. Why not, as well as haymaking and milking?

Came home, and read Mitford again, and played with my mastiff—gave him his supper. Made another reading to the epigram, but the turn the same. To-night at the theatre, there being a prince on his throne in the last scene of the comedy,—the audience laughed, and asked him for a *Constitution*. This shows the state of the public mind here, as well as the assassinations. It won't do. There must be an universal republic,—and there ought to be.

The crow is lame of a leg—wonder how it happened—some fool trod upon his toe, I suppose. The falcon pretty brisk—the cats large and noisy—the monkeys I have not looked to since the cold weather, as they suffer by being brought up. Horses must be gay—get a ride as soon as weather serves. Deuced muggy still—an Italian winter is a sad thing, but all the other seasons are charming.

What is the reason that I have been, all my lifetime, more or less *ennuyé*? and that, if any thing, I am rather less so now than I was at twenty, as far as my recollection serves? I do not know how to answer this, but presume that it is constitutional,—as well as the waking in low spirits, which I have invariably done for many years. Temperance and exercise, which I have practised at times, and for a long time together vigorously and violently, made little or no difference. Violent passions did;—when under their immediate influence—it is odd, but—I was in agitated, but *not* in depressed, spirits.

A dose of salts has the effect of a temporary inebriation, like light champagne, upon me. But wine and spirits make me sullen and savage to ferocity—silent, however, and retiring, and not quarrelsome, if not spoken to. Swimming also raises my spirits,—but in general they are low, and get daily lower. That is *hopeless*; for I do not think I am so much *ennuyé* as I was at nineteen. The proof is, that then I must game, or drink, or be in motion of some kind, or I was miserable. At present, I can mope in quietness; and like being alone better than any company—except the lady's whom I serve.

But I feel a something, which makes me think that, if I ever reach near to old age, like Swift, 'I shall die at top' first. Only I do not dread idiotism or madness so much as he did. On the contrary, I think some quieter stages of both must be preferable to much of what men think the possession of their senses.

January 7, 1821. Sunday

Still rain—mist—snow—drizzle—and all the incalculable combinations of a climate where heat and cold struggle for mastery. Read Spence, and turned over Roscoe, to find a passage I have not found. Read the fourth vol. of W. Scott's second series of *Tales of my Landlord*. Dined. Read the *Lugano Gazette*. Read—I forget what. At eight went to conversazione. Found there the Countess Geltrude, Betti V. and her husband, and others. Pretty black-eyed woman that—only nineteen—same age as Teresa, who is prettier, though.

The Count Pietro G[amba] took me aside to say that the Patriots have had notice from Forli (twenty miles off) that to-night the government and its party mean to strike a stroke—that the Cardinal here has had orders to make several arrests immediately, and that, in consequence, the Liberals are arming, and have posted patrols in the streets, to sound the alarm and give notice to fight for it.

He asked me 'what should be done?' I answered, 'Fight for it, rather than be taken in detail,' and offered, if any of them are in immediate apprehension of arrest, to receive them in my house (which is defensible), and to defend them, with my servants and themselves (we have arms and ammunition), as long as we can,—or try to get them away under cloud of night. On going home, I offered him the pistols which I had about me—but he refused, but said he would come off to me in case of accidents.

It wants half an hour of midnight, and rains;—as Gibbet says, 'a fine night for their enterprise—dark as hell, and blows like the devil.' If the row don't happen now, it must soon. I thought that their system of shooting people would soon produce a re-action—and now it seems coming. I will do what I can in the way of combat, though a little out of exercise. The cause is a good one.

Turned over and over half a score of books for the passage in question, and can't find it. Expect to hear the drum and the musquetry momentarily (for they swear to resist, and are right,)—but I hear nothing, as yet, save the plash of the rain and the gusts of the wind at intervals. Don't like to go to bed, because I hate to be waked, and would rather sit up for the row, if there is to be one.

Mended the fire—have got the arms—and a book or two, which

I shall turn over. I know little of their numbers, but think the Carbonari strong enough to beat the troops, even here. With twenty men this house might be defended for twenty-four hours against any force to be brought against it *now* in this place, for the same time, and, in such a time, the country would have notice, and would rise;—if ever they *will* rise, of which there is some doubt. In the mean time, I may as well read as do any thing else, being alone.

January 8, 1821. Monday

Rose, and found Count P. G. in my apartments. Sent away the servant. Told me that, according to the best information, the Government had not issued orders for the arrests apprehended; that the attack in Forli had not taken place (as expected) by the *Sanfedisti*—the opponents of the *Carbonari* or Liberals—and that, as yet, they are still in apprehension only. Asked me for some arms of a better sort, which I gave him. Settled that, in case of a row, the Liberals were to assemble *here* (with me), and that he had given the word to Vincenzo G. and others of the *Chiefs* for that purpose. He himself and father are going to the chase in the forest; but V. G. is to come to me, and an express to be sent off to him, P. G., if any thing occurs. Concerted operations. They are to seize—but no matter.

I advised them to attack in detail, and in different parties, in different places (though at the *same* time), so as to divide the attention of the troops, who, though few, yet being disciplined, would beat any body of people (not trained) in a regular fight—unless dispersed in small parties, and distracted with different assaults. Offered to let them assemble here if they choose. It is a strongish post—narrow street, commanded from within—and tenable walls.

Dined. Tried on a new coat. Letter to Murray, with corrections of Bacon's *Apophthegms* and an epigram—the *latter not* for publication. At eight went to Teresa, Countess G. At nine and a half came in Il Conte P. and Count P. G. Talked of a certain proclamation lately issued. Count R. G. had been with — (the —), to sound him about the arrests. He, —, is a *trimmer*, and deals, at present, his cards with both hands. If he don't mind, they'll be full. — pretends (*I doubt him—they don't,—we shall see*) that there is no such order, and seems staggered by the immense exertions of the Neapolitans, and the fierce spirit of the Liberals here. The truth is, that — cares for little but his place (which is a good one), and wishes to play pretty with both parties. He has changed his mind thirty times these last three moons, to my knowledge, for he corresponds with me. But he is not a bloody fellow—only an avaricious one.

It seems that, just at this moment (as Lydia Languish says), 'there will be no elopement after all'. I wish that I had known as much last night—or, rather, this morning—I should have gone to bed two hours earlier. And yet I ought not to complain; for, though it is a sirocco, and heavy rain, I have not *yawned* for these two days.

Came home—read *History of Greece*—before dinner had read Walter Scott's *Rob Roy*. Wrote address to the letter in answer to Alessio del Pinto, who has thanked me for helping his brother (the late Commandant, murdered here last month) in his last moments. Have told him I only did a duty of humanity—as is true. The brother lives at Rome.

Mended the fire with some *sgobole* (a Romagnuole word), and gave the falcon some water. Drank some Seltzer-water. Mem.—received to-day a print, or etching, of the story of Ugolino, by an Italian painter—different, of course, from Sir Joshua Reynolds's, and I think (as far as recollection goes) *no worse*, for Reynolds's is not good in history. Tore a button in my new coat.

I wonder what figure these Italians will make in a regular row. I sometimes think that, like the Irishman's gun (somebody had sold him a crooked one), they will only do for 'shooting round a corner;' at least, this sort of shooting has been the late tenor of their exploits. And yet there are materials in this people, and a noble energy, if well directed. But who is to direct them? No matter. Out of such times heroes spring. Difficulties are the hotbeds of high spirits, and Freedom the mother of the few virtues incident to human nature.

Tuesday, January 9, 1821

Rose—the day fine. Ordered the horses; but Lega (my *secretary*, an Italianism for steward or chief servant) coming to tell me that the painter had finished the work in fresco for the room he has been employed on lately, I went to see it before I set out. The painter has not copied badly the prints from Titian, etc. considering all things.

Dined. Read Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*,—all the examples and mode of giving them sublime, as well as the latter part, with the exception of an occasional couplet. I do not so much admire the opening. I remember an observation of Sharpe's, (the *Conversationist*, as he was called in London, and a very clever man,) that the first line of this poem was superfluous, and that Pope (the best of poets, I think,) would have begun at once, only changing the punctuation—

Survey mankind from China to Peru.

The former line, 'Let observation,' etc., is certainly heavy and useless.

But 'tis a grand poem—and *so true!*—true as the 10th of Juvenal himself. The lapse of ages *changes* all things—time—language—the earth—the bounds of the sea—the stars of the sky, and every thing 'about, around, and underneath' man, *except man himself*, who has always been, and always will be, an unlucky rascal. The infinite variety of lives conduct but to death, and the infinity of wishes lead but to disappointment. All the discoveries which have yet been made have multiplied little but existence. An extirpated disease is succeeded by some new pestilence; and, a discovered world has brought little to the old one, except the p—— first and freedom afterwards—the *atter* a fine thing, particularly as they gave it to Europe in exchange for slavery. But it is doubtful whether 'the Sovereigns' would not think the *first* the best present of the two to their subjects.

At eight went out—heard some news. They say the King of Naples has declared by couriers from Florence, to the *Powers* (as they call now those wretches with crowns), that his Constitution was compulsive, etc., etc., and that the Austrian barbarians are placed again on *war* pay, and will march. Let them—'they come like sacrifices in their trim,' the hounds of hell! Let it still be a hope to see their bones piled like those of the human dogs at Morat, in Switzerland, which I have seen.

Heard some music. At nine the usual visitors—news, *war*, or rumours of war. Consulted with P. G. etc., etc. They mean to *insurrect* here, and are to honour me with a call thereupon. I shall not fall back; though I don't think them in force or heart sufficient to make much of it. But, *onward!*—it is now the time to act, and what signifies *self*, if a single spark of that which would be worthy of the past can be bequeathed unquenchedly to the future? It is not one man, nor a million, but the *spirit* of liberty which must be spread. The waves which dash upon the shore are, one by one, broken, but yet the *ocean* conquers, nevertheless. It overwhelms the Armada, it wears the rock, and, if the *Neptunians* are to be believed, it has not only destroyed, but made a world. In like manner, whatever the sacrifice of individuals, the great cause will gather strength, sweep down what is rugged, and fertilise (for *sea-weed* is *manure*) what is cultivable. And so, the mere selfish calculation ought never to be made on such occasions; and, at present, it shall not be computed by me. I was never a good arithmetician of chances, and shall not commence now.

January 10, 1821

Day fine—rained only in the morning. Looked over accounts. Read Campbell's *Poets*—marked errors of Tom (the author) for

correction. Dined—went out—music—Tyrolese air, with variations. Sustained the cause of the original simple air against the variations of the Italian school.

Politics somewhat tempestuous, and cloudier daily. To-morrow being foreign post-day, probably something more will be known.

Came home—read. Corrected Tom Campbell's slips of the pen. A good work, though—style affected—but his defence of Pope is glorious. To be sure, it is his *own cause* too,—but no matter, it is very good, and does him great credit.

Midnight

I have been turning over different *Lives* of the Poets. I rarely read their works, unless an occasional flight over the classical ones, Pope, Dryden, Johnson, Gray, and those who approach them nearest (I leave the *rant* of the rest to the *cant* of the day), and—I had made several reflections, but I feel sleepy, and may as well go to bed.

January 11, 1821

"Read the letters. Corrected the tragedy and the *Hints from Horace*. Dined, and got into better spirits. Went out—returned—finished letters, five in number. Read *Poets*, and an anecdote in Spence.

All! writes to me that the Pope, and Duke of Tuscany, and King of Sardinia, have also been called to Congress; but the Pope will only deal there by proxy. So the interests of millions are in the hands of about twenty coxcombs, at a place called Leibach!

I should almost regret that my own affairs went well, when those of nations are in peril. If the interests of mankind could be essentially bettered (particularly of these oppressed Italians), I should not so much mind my own 'sma peculiar.' God grant us all better times, or more philosophy!

In reading, I have just chanced upon an expression of Tom Campbell's;—speaking of Collins, he says that 'no reader cares any more about the *characteristic manners* of his Eclogues than about the authenticity of the tale of Troy.' 'Tis false—we *do* care about 'the authenticity of the tale of Troy.' I have stood upon that plain *daily*, for more than a month in 1810; and if any thing diminished my pleasure, it was that the blackguard Bryant had impugned its veracity. It is true I read *Homer Travestied* (the first twelve books), because Hobhouse and others bored me with their learned localities, and I love quizzing. But I still venerated the grand original as the truth of *history* (in the material *facts*) and of *place*. Otherwise, it would have given me no delight. Who will persuade me, when I reclined upon a mighty

tomb, that it did not contain a hero?—its very magnitude proved tois. Men do not labour over the ignoble and petty dead—and why should not the *dead* be *Homer's* dead? The secret of Tom Campbell's defence of *inaccuracy* in costume and description is, that his *Gertrude*, etc. has no more locality in common with Pennsylvania than with Penmanmaur. It is notoriously full of grossly false scenery, as all Americans declare, though they praise parts of the poem. It is thus that self-love for ever creeps out, like a snake, to sting any thing which happens, even accidentally, to stumble upon it.

January 12, 1821

The weather still so humid and impracticable, that London, in its most oppressive fogs, were a summer-bower to this mist and sirocco, which has now lasted (but with one day's interval), chequered with snow or heavy rain only, since the 30th of December, 1820. It is so far lucky that I have a literary turn;—but it is very tiresome not to be able to stir out, in comfort, on any horse but Pegasus, for so many days. The roads are even worse than the weather, by the long splashing, and the heavy soil, and the growth of the waters.

Read the Poets—English, that is to say—out of Campbell's edition. There is a good deal of taffeta in some of Tom's prefatory phrases, but his work is good as a whole. I like him best, though, in his own poetry.

Murray writes that they want to act the Tragedy of *Marino Faliero*—more fools they, it was written for the closet. I have protested against this piece of usurpation, (which, it seems, is legal for managers over any printed work, against the author's will) and I hope they will not attempt it. Why don't they bring out some of the numberless aspirants for theatrical celebrity, now encumbering their shelves, instead of lugging me out of the library? I have written a fierce protest against any such attempt; but I still would hope that it will not be necessary, and that they will see, at once, that it is not intended for the stage. It is too regular—the time, twenty-four hours—the change of place not frequent—nothing *melo-dramatic*—no surprises, no starts, nor trap-doors, nor opportunities 'for tossing their heads and kicking their heels'—and no *love*—the grand ingredient of a modern play.

I have found out the seal cut on Murray's letter. It is meant for Walter Scott—or *Sir* Walter—he is the first poet knighted since Sir Richard Blackmore. But it does not do him justice. Scott's—particularly when he recites—is a very intelligent countenance, and this seal says nothing.

Scott is certainly the most wonderful writer of the day. His novels are a new literature in themselves, and his poetry as good as any—if not better (only on an erroneous system)—and only ceased to be so popular, because the vulgar learned were tired of hearing ‘Aristides called the Just,’ and Scott the Best, and ostracised him.

I like him, too, for his manliness of character, for the extreme pleasantness of his conversation, and his good-nature towards myself, personally. May he prosper!—for he deserves it. I know no reading to which I fall with such alacrity as a work of W. Scott’s. I shall give the seal, with his bust on it, to Madame la Comtesse G. this evening, who will be curious to have the effigies of a man so celebrated.

How strange are my thoughts! . . .

Midnight

Read the Italian translation by Guido Sorelli of the German Grillparzer—a devil of a name, to be sure, for posterity; but they *must* learn to pronounce it. With all the allowance for a *translation*, and above all, an *Italian* translation (they are the very worst of translators, except from the Classics—Annibale Caro, for instance—and *there*, the bastardy of their language helps them, as, by way of *looking legitimate*, they ape their father’s tongue);—but with every allowance for such a disadvantage, the tragedy of *Sappho* is superb and sublime! There is no denying it. The man has done a great thing in writing that play. And *who is he?* I know him not; but *ages will*. ‘Tis a high intellect.

I must premise, however, that I have read *nothing* of Adolph Müllner’s (the author of *Guilt*,) and much less of Goethe, and Schiller, and Wieland, than I could wish. I only know them through the medium of English, French, and Italian translations. Of the *real* language I know absolutely nothing,—except oaths learned from postillions and officers in a squabble! I can *swear* in German potently, when I like—‘Sacrament—*Verfluchter—Hundsfoth*’—and so forth; but I have little else of their energetic conversation.

I like, however, their women, (I was once *so desperately* in love with a German woman, Constance,) and all that I have read, translated, of their writings, and all that I have seen on the Rhine of their country and people—all, except the Austrians, whom I abhor, loathe, and—I cannot find words for my hate of them, and should be sorry to find deeds correspondent to my hate; for I abhor cruelty more than I abhor the Austrians—except on an impulse, and then I am savage—but not deliberately so.

Grillparzer is grand—antique—not so simple as the ancients, but

very simple for a modern—too Madame de Staël*ish*, now and then—but altogether a great and goodly writer.

January 13, 1821, Saturday

Sketched the outline and Drams. Pers. of an intended tragedy of Sardanapalus, which I have for some time meditated. Took the names from Diodorus Siculus, (I know the history of Sardanapalus, and have known it since I was twelve years old,) and read over a passage in the ninth vol. octavo, of Mitford's *Greece*, where he rather vindicates the memory of this last of the Assyrians.

Dined—news come—the *Powers* mean to war with the peoples. The intelligence seems positive—let it be so—they will be beaten in the end. The king-times are fast finishing. There will be blood shed like water, and tears like mist; but the peoples will conquer in the end. I shall not live to see it, but I foresee it.

I carried Teresa the Italian translation of Grillparzer's *Sappho*, which she promises to read. She quarrelled with me, because I said that love was *not the loftiest* theme for true tragedy; and, having the advantage of her native language, and natural female eloquence, she overcame my fewer arguments. I believe she was right. I must put more love into *Sardanapalus* than I intended. I speak, of course, *if* the times will allow me leisure. That *if* will hardly be a peace-maker.

January 14, 1821

Turned over Seneca's tragedies. Wrote the opening lines of the intended tragedy of *Sardanapalus*. Rode out some miles into the forest. Misty and rainy. Returned—dined—wrote some more of my tragedy.

Read Diodorus Siculus—turned over Seneca, and some other books. Wrote some more of the tragedy. Took a glass of grog. After having ridden hard in rainy weather, and scribbled, and scribbled again, the spirits (at least mine) need a little exhilaration, and I don't like laudanum now as I used to do. So I have mixed a glass of strong waters and single waters, which I shall now proceed to empty. Therefore and thereunto I conclude this day's diary.

The effect of all wines and spirits upon me is, however, strange. It *settles*, but it makes me gloomy—gloomy at the very moment of their effect, and not gay hardly ever. But it composes for a time, though sullenly.

January 15, 1821

Weather fine. Received visit. Rode out into the forest—fired pistols.

Returned home—dined—dipped into a volume of Mitford's *Greece*—wrote part of a scene of *Sardanapalus*. Went out—heard some music—heard some politics. More ministers from the other Italian powers gone to Congress. War seems certain—in that case, it will be a savage one. Talked over various important matters with one of the initiated. At ten and half returned home.

I have just thought of something odd. In the year 1814, Moore ('the poet,' *par excellence*, and he deserves it) and I were going together, in the same carriage, to dine with Earl Grey, the *Capo Politico* of the remaining Whigs. Murray, the magnificent (the illustrious publisher of that name), had just sent me a Java gazette—I know not why, or wherefore. Pulling it out, by way of curiosity, we found it to contain a dispute (the said Java gazette) on Moore's merits and mine. I think, if I had been there, that I could have saved them the trouble of disputing on the subject. But, there is *fame* for you at six and twenty! Alexander had conquered India at the same age; but I doubt if he was disputed about, or his conquests compared with those of Indian Bacchus, at Java.

It was a great fame to be named with Moore; greater to be compared with him; greatest—*pleasure*, at least—to be *with* him; and, surely, an odd coincidence, that we should be dining together while they were quarrelling about us beyond the equinoctial line.

Well, the same evening, I met Lawrence the painter, and heard one of Lord Grey's daughters (a fine, tall, spirit-looking girl, with much of the *patrician thorough-bred* look of her father, which I dote upon) play on the harp, so modestly and ingenuously, that she *looked music*. Well, I would rather have had my talk with Lawrence (who talked delightfully) and heard the girl, than have had all the fame of Moore and me put together.

The only pleasure of fame is that it paves the way to pleasure; and the more intellectual our pleasure, the better for the pleasure and for us too. It was, however, agreeable to have heard our fame before dinner, and a girl's harp after.

January 16, 1821

Read—rode—fired pistols—returned—dined—wrote—visited—heard music—talked nonsense—and went home.

Wrote part of a Tragedy—advanced in Act 1st with 'all deliberate speed.' Bought a blanket. The weather is still muggy as a London May—mist, mizzle, the air replete with Scotticisms, which, though fine in the descriptions of Ossian, are somewhat tiresome in real, prosaic perspective. Politics still mysterious.

January 17, 1821

Rode i' the forest—fired pistols—dined. Arrived a packet of books from England and Lombardy—English, Italian, French, and Latin. Read till eight—went out.

January 18, 1821

To-day, the post arriving late, did not ride. Read letters—only two gazettes instead of twelve now due. Made Lega write to that negligent Galignani, and added a postscript. Dined.

At eight proposed to go out. Lega came in with a letter about a bill *unpaid* at Venice, which I thought paid months ago. I flew into a paroxysm of rage, which almost made me faint. I have not been well ever since. I deserve it for being such a fool—but it *was* provoking—a set of scoundrels! It is, however, but five and twenty pounds.

January 19, 1821

Rode. Winter's wind somewhat more unkind than ingratitude itself, though Shakspeare says otherwise. At least, I am so much more accustomed to meet with ingratitude than the north wind, that I thought the latter the sharper of the two. I had met with both in the course of the twenty-four hours, so could judge.

Thought of a plan of education for my daughter Allegra, who ought to begin soon with her studies. Wrote a letter—afterwards a postscript. Rather in low spirits—certainly hippish—liver touched—will take a dose of salts.

I have been reading the *Life*, by himself and daughter, of Mr. R. L. Edgeworth, the father of *the* Miss Edgeworth. It is altogether a great name. In 1813, I recollect to have met them in the fashionable world of London (of which I then formed an item, a fraction, the segment of a circle, the unit of a million, the nothing of something) in the assemblies of the hour, and at a breakfast of Sir Humphry and Lady Davy's, to which I was invited for the nonce. I had been the lion of 1812: Miss Edgeworth and Madame de Stael, with 'the Cossack,' towards the end of 1813, were the exhibitions of the succeeding year.

I thought Edgeworth a fine old fellow, of a clarety, elderly, red complexion, but active, brisk, and endless. He was seventy, but did not look fifty—no, nor forty-eight even. I had seen poor Fitzpatrick not very long before—a man of pleasure, wit, eloquence, all things. He tottered—but still talked like a gentleman, though feebly. Edgeworth bounced about, and talked loud and long; but he seemed neither weakly nor decrepit, and hardly old.

He began by telling 'that he had given Dr. Parr a dressing, who had taken him for an Irish bogtrotter,' etc., etc. Now I, who know Dr. Parr, and who know (*not* by experience—for I never should have presumed so far as to contend with him—but by hearing him *with* others, and *of* others) that it is not so easy a matter to 'dress him,' thought Mr. Edgeworth an assertor of what was not true. He could not have stood before Parr an instant. For the rest, he seemed intelligent, vehement, vivacious, and full of life. He bids fair for a hundred years.

He was not much admired in London, and I remember a 'ryghte merrie' and conceited jest which was rife among the gallants of the day,—viz. a paper had been presented for the *recall* of *Mrs. Siddons to the stage*, (she having lately taken leave, to the loss of ages,—for nothing ever was, or can be, like her,) to which all men had been called to subscribe. Whereupon Thomas Moore, of profane and poetical memory, did propose that a similar paper should be *subscribed* and *circumscribed* 'for the recall of Mr. Edgeworth to Ireland.'

'The fact was—every body cared more about *her*. She was a nice little unassuming 'Jeanie Deans-looking body,' as we Scotch say—and, if not handsome, certainly not ill-looking. Her conversation was as quiet as herself. One would never have guessed she could write *her name*; whereas her father talked, *not* as if he could write nothing else, but as if nothing else was worth writing.

As for Mrs. Edgeworth, I forget—except that I think she was the youngest of the party. Altogether, they were an excellent cage of the kind; and succeeded for two months, till the landing of Madame de Stael.

To turn from them to their works, I admire them; but they excite no feeling, and they leave no love—except for some Irish steward or postillion. However, the impression of intellect and prudence is profound—and may be useful.

January 21, 1821

Rode—fired pistols. Read from Grimm's *Correspondence*. Dined—went out—heard music—returned—wrote a letter to the Lord Chamberlain to request him to prevent the theatres from representing the Doge, which the Italian papers say that they are going to act. This is pretty work—what! without asking my consent, and even in opposition to it!

January 21, 1821

Fine, clear, frosty day—that is to say, an Italian frost, for their winters hardly get beyond snow; for which reason nobody knows

how to skate (or skait)—a Dutch and English accomplishment. Rode out, as usual, and fired pistols. Good shooting—broke four common, and rather small, bottles, in four shots, at fourteen paces, with a common pair of pistols and indifferent powder. Almost as good *wafering* or shooting—considering the difference of powder and pistol,—as when, in 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814, it was my luck to split walking-sticks, wafers, half-crowns, shillings, and even the eye of a walking-stick, at twelve paces, with a single bullet—and all by eye and calculation; for my hand is not steady, and apt to change with the very weather. To the prowess which I here note, Joe Manton and others can bear testimony; for the former taught, and the latter has seen me do, these feats.

Dined—visited—came home—read. Remarked on an anecdote in Grimm's *Correspondence*, which says that 'Regnard et la plupart des poètes comiques étaient gens bilieux et mélancoliques; et que M. de Voltaire, qui est très gai, n'a jamais fait que des tragédies—et que la comédie gaie est le seul genre où il n'ait point réussi. C'est que celui qui rit et celui qui fait rire sont deux hommes fort différens.'—Vol. VI.

At this moment I feel as bilious as the best comic writer of them all, (even as Regnard himself, the next to Molière, who has written some of the best comedies in any language, and who is supposed to have committed suicide,) and am not in spirits to continue my proposed tragedy of *Sardanapalus*, which I have, for some days, ceased to compose.

To-morrow is my birth-day—that is to say, at twelve o' the clock, midnight, *i.e.* in twelve minutes, I shall have completed thirty and three years of age!!!—and I go to my bed with a heaviness of heart at having lived so long, and to so little purpose.

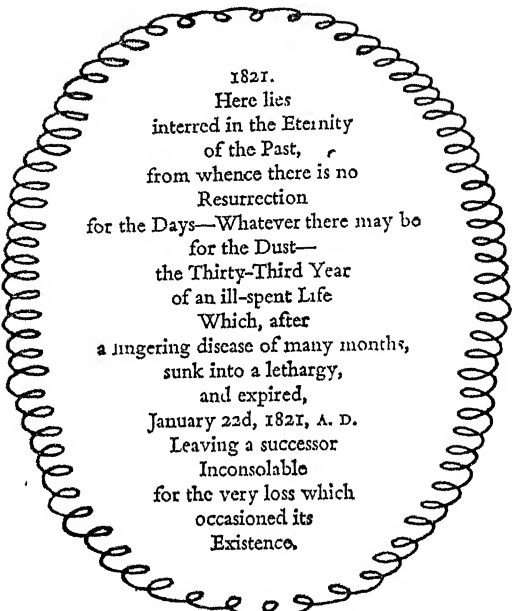
It is three minutes past twelve.—'Tis the middle of the night by the castle clock,' and I am now thirty-three!

*Eheu, fugaces, Posthume, Posthume,
Labuntur anni;—*

but I don't regret them so much for what I have done, as for what I *might* have done.

*Through life's road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragged to three-and-thirty.
What have these years left to me?
Nothing—except thirty-three.*

January 22, 1821



1821.
Here lies
interred in the Eternity
of the Past,
from whence there is no
Resurrection
for the Days—Whatever there may be
for the Dust—
the Thirty-Third Year
of an ill-spent Life
Which, after
a lingering disease of many months,
sunk into a lethargy,
and expired,
January 22d, 1821, A. D.
Leaving a successor
Inconsolable
for the very loss which
occasioned its
Existence.

January 23, 1821

Fine day. Read—rode—fired pistols, and returned. Dined—read. Went out at eight—made the usual visit. Heard of nothing but war,—the cry is still, *They come.* The Carbonari seem to have no plan—nothing fixed among themselves, how, when, or what to do. In that case, they will make nothing of this project, so often postponed, and never put in action.

Came home, and gave some necessary orders, in case of circumstances requiring a change of place. I shall act according to what may seem proper, when I hear decidedly what the Barbarians mean to do. At present, they are building a bridge of boats over the Po, which looks very warlike. A few days will probably show. I think of retiring towards Ancona, nearer the northern frontier; that is to say, if

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY

Teresa and her father are obliged to retire, which is most likely, as all the family are Liberals. If not, I shall stay. But my movements will depend upon the lady's wishes—for myself, it is much the same.

I am somewhat puzzled what to do with my little daughter, and my effects, which are of some quantity and value,—and neither of them do in the seat of war, where I think of going. But there is an elderly lady who will take charge of *her*, and T. says that the Marchese C. will undertake to hold the chattels in safe keeping. Half the city are getting their affairs in marching trim. A pretty Carnival! The blackguards might as well have waited till Lent.

January 24, 1821

Returned—met some masques in the Corso—*Vive la bagatelle!*—the Germans are on the Po, the Barbarians at the gate, and their masters in council at Leybach (or whatever the eructation of the sound may syllable into a human pronunciation), and lo! they dance and sing and make merry, 'for to-morrow they may die.' Who can say that the Arlequins are not right? Like the Lady Baussiere, and my old friend Burton—I 'rode on.'

Dined—(damn this pen!)—beef tough—there is no beef in Italy worth a curse; unless a man could eat an old ox with the hide on, singed in the sun.

The principal persons in the events which may occur in a few days are gone out on a *shooting party*. If it were like a 'highland hunting,' a pretext of the chase for a grand re-union of counsellors and chiefs, it would be all very well. But it is nothing more or less than a real snivelling, popping, small-shot, water-hen waste of powder, ammunition, and shot, for their own special amusement: a rare set of fellows for 'a man to risk his neck with,' as 'Marishall Wells' says in the *Black Dwarf*.

If they gather,—'whilk is to be doubted,'—they will not muster a thousand men. The reason of this is, that the populace are not interested,—only the higher and middle orders. I wish that the peasantry *were*; they are a fine savage race of two-legged leopards. But the Bolognese won't—the Romagnuoles can't without them. Or, if they try—what then? They will try, and man can do no more—and, if he *would* but try his utmost, much might be done. The Dutch, for instance, against the Spaniards—*then* the tyrants of Europe, since, the slaves, and, lately, the freedmen.

The year 1820 was not a fortunate one for the individual me, whatever it may be for the nations. I lost a lawsuit, after two decisions in my favour. The project of lending money on an Irish mortgage was

finally rejected by my wife's trustee after a year's hope and trouble. The Rochdale lawsuit had endured fifteen years, and always prospered till I married; since which, every thing has gone wrong—with me at least.

In the same year, 1820, the Countess T. G. *nata* G^l. G^l., in despite of all I said and did to prevent it, *would* separate from her husband, Il Cavalier Commendatore G^l. etc., etc., etc., and all on the account of 'P. P. clerk of this parish.' The other little petty vexations of the year—overturms in carriages—the murder of people before one's door, and dying in one's beds—the cramp in swimming—colics—indigestions and bilious attacks, etc., etc., etc.—

*Many small articles make up a sum,
And hey ho for Caleb Quotem, oh!*

January 25, 1821

Received a letter from Lord S[idney] O[sborne], state secretary of the Seven Islands—a fine fellow—clever—dished in England five years ago, and came abroad to retrench and to renew. He wrote from Ancona, in his way back to Corfu, on some matters of our own. He is son of the late Duke of L[eeches] by a second marriage. He wants me to go to Corfu. Why not?—perhaps I may, next spring.

Answered Murray's letter—read—lounged. Scrawled this additional page of life's log-book. One day more is over of it and of me:—but 'which is best, life or death, the gods only know,' as Socrates said to his judges, on the breaking up of the tribunal. Two thousand years since that sage's declaration of ignorance have not enlightened us more upon this important point; for, according to the Christian dispensation, no one can know whether he is *sure* of salvation—even the most righteous—since a single slip of faith may throw him on his back, like a skater, while gliding smoothly to his paradise. Now, therefore, whatever the certainty of faith in the facts may be, the certainty of the individual as to his happiness or misery is no greater than it was under Jupiter.

It has been said that the immortality of the soul is a *grand peut-être*—but still it is a *grand* one. Every body clings to it—the stupidest, and dullest, and wickedest of human bipeds is still persuaded that he is immortal.

January 26, 1821

Fine day—a few mares' tails portending change, but the sky clear, upon the whole. Rode—fired pistols—good shooting. Coming back,

met an old man. Charity—purchased a shilling's worth of salvation. If that was to be bought, I have given more to my fellow-creatures in this life—sometimes for *vice*, but, if not more *often*, at least more *considerably*, for virtue—than I now possess. I never in my life gave a mistress so much as I have sometimes given a poor man in honest distress; but no matter. The scoundrels who have all along persecuted me (with the help of — who has crowned their efforts) will triumph;—and, when justice is done to me, it will be when this hand that writes is as cold as the hearts which have stung me.

Returning, on the bridge near the mill, met an old woman. I asked her age—she said '*Tre croci*.' I asked my groom (though myself a decent Italian) what the devil *her* three crosses meant. He said, ninety years, and that she had five years more to boot!! I repeated the same three times—not to mistake—ninety-five years!!!—and she was yet rather active—*heard* my question, for she answered it—*saw* me, for she advanced towards me; and did not appear at all decrepit, though certainly touched with years. Told her to come to-morrow, and will examine her myself. I love phenomena. If she is ninety-five years old, she must recollect the Cardinal Alberoni, who was legate here.

On dismounting, found Lieutenant E. just arrived from Faenza. Invited him to dine with me to-morrow. Did *not* invite him for to-day, because there was a small *turbot*, (Friday, fast regularly and religiously,) which I wanted to eat all myself. Ate it.

Went out—found T. as usual—music. The gentlemen, who make revolutions and are gone on a shooting, are not yet returned. They don't return till Sunday—that is to say, they have been out for five days, buffooning, while the interests of a whole country are at stake, and even they themselves compromised.

It is a difficult part to play amongst such a set of assassins and blockheads—but, when the scum is skimmed off, or has boiled over, good may come of it. If this country could but be freed, what would be too great for the accomplishment of that desire? for the extinction of that Sigh of Ages? Let us hope. They have hoped these thousand years. The very revolvment of the chances may bring it—it is upon the dice.

If the Neapolitans have but a single Massaniello amongst them, they will beat the bloody butchers of the crown and sabre. Holland, in worse circumstances, beat the Spains and Philips; America beat the English; Greece beat Xerxes; and France beat Europe, till she took a tyrant; South America beats her old vultures out of their nest; and, if these men are but firm in themselves, there is nothing to shake them from without.

January 28, 1821

Lugano Gazette did not come. Letters from Venice. It appears that the Austrian brutes have seized my three or four pounds of English powder. The scoundrels!—I hope to pay them in *ball* for that powder. Rode out till twilight.

Pondered the subjects of four tragedies to be written (life and circumstances permitting), to wit, *Sardanapalus*, already begun; *Cain*, a metaphysical subject, something in the style of *Manfred*, but in five *acts*, perhaps, with the chorus; *Francesca* of Rimini, in five acts; and I am not sure that I would not try *Tiberius*. I think that I could extract a something, of *my* tragic, at least, out of the gloomy sequestration and old age of the tyrant—and even out of his sojourn at *Caprea*—by softening the *details*, and exhibiting the despair which must have led to those very vicious pleasures. For none but a powerful and gloomy mind overthrown would have had recourse to such solitary horrors,—being also, at the same time, *old*, and the master of the world.

Memoranda.

What is Poetry?—The feeling of a Former world and Future.

Thought Second.

Why, at the very height of desire and human pleasure,—worldly, social, amorous, ambitious, or even avaricious,—does there mingle a certain sense of doubt and sorrow—a fear of what is to come—a doubt of what *is*—a retrospect to the past, leading to a prognostication of the future? (The best of Prophets of the future is the Past.) Why is this, or these?—I know not, except that on a pinnacle we are most susceptible of giddiness, and that we never fear falling except from a precipice—the higher, the more awful, and the more sublime; and, therefore, I am not sure that Fear is not a pleasurable sensation; at least, *Hope* is; and *what Hope* is there without a deep leaven of Fear? and what sensation is so delightful as Hope? and, if it were not for Hope, where would the Future be?—in hell. It is useless to say *where* the Present is, for most of us know; and as for the Past, *what* predominates in memory?—*Hope baffled*. Ergo, in all human affairs, it is Hope—Hope—Hope. I allow sixteen minutes, though I never counted them, to any given or supposed possession. From whatever place we commence, we know where it all must end. And yet, what good is there in knowing it? It does not make men better or wiser.

During the greatest horrors of the greatest plagues, (Athens and Florence, for example—see Thucydides and Machiavelli,) men were more cruel and profligate than ever. It is all a mystery. I feel most things, but I know nothing, except

— — — — —
 — — — — —
 — — — — —

*Thought for a Speech of Lucifer, in the
 Tragedy of Cain:—*

*Were Death an evil, would I let thee live?
 Fool! live as I live—as thy father lives,
 And thy son's sons shall live for evermore.*

Past Midnight. One o' the clock

I have been reading Frederick Schlegel (brother to the other of the name) till now, and I can make out nothing. He evidently shows a great power of words, but there is nothing to be taken hold of. He is like Hazlitt, in English, who *talks pimples*—a red and white corruption rising up (in little imitation of mountains upon maps), but containing nothing, and discharging nothing, except their own humours.

I dislike him the worse, (that is, Schlegel,) because he always seems upon the verge of meaning; and, lo, he goes down like sunset, or melts like a rainbow, leaving a rather rich confusion,—to which, however, the above comparisons do too much honour.

Continuing to read Mr. Frederick Schlegel. He is not such a fool as I took him for, that is to say, when he speaks of the North. But still he speaks of things *all over the world* with a kind of authority that a philosopher would disdain, and a man of common sense, feeling, and knowledge of his own ignorance, would be ashamed of. The man is evidently wanting to make an impression, like his brother,—or like George in the Vicar of Wakefield, who found out that all the good things had been said already on the right side, and therefore 'dressed up some paradoxes' upon the wrong side—ingenious, but false, as he himself says—to which 'the learned world said nothing, nothing at all, sir.' The 'learned world,' however, *has* said something to the brothers Schlegel.

It is high time to think of something else. What they say of the antiquities of the North is best.

January 29, 1821

Yesterday, the woman of ninety-five years of age was with me. She said her eldest son (if now alive) would have been seventy. She is

thin—short, but active—hears, and sees, and talks incessantly. Several teeth left—all in the lower jaw, and single front teeth. She is very deeply wrinkled, and has a sort of scattered grey beard over her chin, at least as long as my mustachios. Her head, in fact, resembles the drawing in crayons of Pope the poet's mother, which is in some editions of his works.

I forgot to ask her if she remembered Alberoni (legate here), but will ask her next time. Gave her a louis—ordered her a new suit of clothes, and put her upon a weekly pension. Till now, she had worked at gathering wood and pine-nuts in the forest,—pretty work at ninety-five years old! She had a dozen children, of whom some are alive. Her name is Maria Montanari.

Met a company of the sect (a kind of Liberal Club) called the *Americani* in the forest, all armed, and singing, with all their might, in Romagnuole—'*Sem tutti soldat per la liberta*' ('we are all soldiers for liberty'). They cheered me as I passed—I returned their salute, and rode on. This may show the spirit of Italy at present.

My to-day's journal consists of what I omitted yesterday. To-day was much as usual. Have rather a better opinion of the writings of the Schlegels than I had four-and-twenty hours ago; and will amend it still further, if possible.

They say that the Piedmontese have at length arisen—*ça ira!*

Read Schlegel. Of Dante he says, 'that at no time has the greatest and most national of all Italian poets ever been much the favourite of his countrymen.' 'Tis false! There have been more editors and commentators (and imitators, ultimately) of Dante than of all their poets put together. *Not* a favourite! Why, they talk Dante—write Dante—and think and dream Dante at this moment (1821) to an excess, which would be ridiculous, but that he deserves it.

In the same style this German talks of gondolas on the Arno—a precious fellow to dare to speak of Italy!

He says also that Dante's chief defect is a want, in a word, of gentle feelings. Of gentle feelings!—and Francesca of Rimini—and the father's feelings in Ugolino—and Beatrice—and 'La Pia!' Why, there is gentleness in Dante beyond-all gentleness, when he is tender. It is true that, treating of the Christian Hades, or Hell, there is not much scope or site for gentleness—but who *but* Dante could have introduced any 'gentleness' at all into *Hell*? Is there any in Milton's? No—and Dante's Heaven is all love, and glory and majesty.

One o'clock

I have found out, however, where the German is right—it is about

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY

the *Vicar of Wakefield*. 'Of all romances in miniature (and, perhaps, this is the best shape in which romance can appear) the *Vicar of Wakefield* is, I think, the most exquisite.' He *thinks!*—he might be sure. But it is very well for a Schlegel. I feel sleepy, and may as well get me to bed. To-morrow there will be fine weather.

Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay.

January 30, 1821

The Count P. G. this evening (by commission from the Ci.) transmitted to me the new *words* for the next six months. — and —. The new sacred word is — . . . the reply — . . . the rejoinder —. The former word (now changed) was — . . . there is also — . . . —. Things seem fast coming to a crisis—*ça ira!*

We talked over various matters of moment and movement. These I omit;—if they come to any thing, they will speak for themselves. After these, we spoke of Kosciusko. Count R. G. told me that he has seen the Polish officers in the Italian war burst into tears on hearing his name.

Something must be up in Piedmont—all the letters and papers are stopped. Nobody knows anything, and the Germans are concentrating near Mantua. Of the decision of Leybach nothing is known. This state of things cannot last long. The ferment in men's minds at present cannot be conceived without seeing it.

January 31, 1821

For several days I have not written any thing except a few answers to letters. In momentary expectation of an explosion of some kind, it is not easy to settle down to the desk for the higher kinds of composition. I *could* do it, to be sure, for, last summer, I wrote my drama in the very bustle of Madame la Contessa G.'s divorce, and all its process of accompaniments. At the same time, I also had the news of the loss of an important lawsuit in England. But these were only private and personal business; the present is of a different nature.

I suppose it is this, but have some suspicion that it may be laziness, which prevents me from writing; especially as Rochefoucault says that 'laziness often masters them all'—speaking of the *passions*. If this were true, it could hardly be said that 'idleness is the root of all evil,' since this is supposed to spring from the passions only: ergo, that which masters all the passions (laziness, to wit) would in so much be a good. Who knows?

I have been reading Grimm's *Correspondence*. He repeats frequently, in speaking of a poet, or a man of genius in any department, even in music, (Grétry, for instance,) that he must have *une ame qui se tourmente, un esprit violent*. How far this may be true, I know not; but if it were, I should be a poet '*per eccellenza*;' for I have always had *une ame*, which not only tormented itself but every body else in contact with it; and an *esprit violent*, which has almost left me without any *esprit* at all. As to defining what a poet *should* be, it is not worth while, for what are *they* worth? what have they done?

Grimm, however, is an excellent critic and literary historian. His *Correspondence* forms the annals of the literary part of that age of France, with much of her politics, and still more of her 'way of life.' He is as valuable, and far more entertaining than Muratori or Tiraboschi—I had almost said, than Ginguené—but there we should pause. However, 'tis a great man in its line.

Monsieur St. Lambert has,

Et lorsqu'à ses regards la lumière est ravie,
Il n'a plus, en mourant, à perdre que la vie.

This is, word for word, Thomson's

And dying, all we can resign is breath,

without the smallest acknowledgment from the Lorrainer of a poet. M. St. Lambert is dead as a man, and (for any thing I know to the contrary) damned, as a poet, by this time. However, his *Seasons* have good things, and, it may be, some of his own.

February 2, 1821

I have been considering what can be the reason why I always wake, at a certain hour in the morning, and always in very bad spirits—I may say, in actual despair and despondency, in all respects—even of that which pleased me over night. In about an hour or two, this goes off, and I compose either to sleep again, or, at least, to quiet. In England, five years ago, I had the same kind of hypochondria, but accompanied with so violent a thirst that I have drank as many as fifteen bottles of soda-water in one night, after going to bed, and been still thirsty—calculating, however, some lost from the bursting out and effervescence and overflowing of the soda-water, in drawing the corks, or striking off the necks of the bottles from mere thirsty im-

patience. At present, I have *not* the thirst; but the depression of spirits is no less violent.

I read in Edgeworth's *Memoirs* of something similar (except that his thirst expended itself on *small beer*) in the case of Sir F. B. Delaval;—but then he was, at least, twenty years older. What is it?—liver? In England, Le Man (the apothecary) cured me of the thirst in three days, and it had lasted as many years. I suppose that it is all hypochondria.

What I feel most growing upon me are laziness, and a disrelish more powerful than indifference. If I rouse, it is into fury, I presume that I shall end (if not earlier by accident, or some such termination) like Swift—'dying at top.' I confess I do not contemplate this with so much horror as he apparently did for some years before it happened. But Swift had hardly *begun life* at the very period (thirty-three) when I feel quite an *old sort* of feel.

'Oh! there is an organ playing in the street—a waltz, too! I must leave off to listen. They are playing a waltz which I have heard ten thousand times at the balls in London, between 1812 and 1815. Music is a strange thing.

February 5, 1821

At last, 'the kiln's in a low.' The Germans are ordered to march and Italy is, for the ten thousandth time, to become a field of battle. Last night the news came.

This afternoon—Count P. G. came to me to consult upon divers matters. We rode out together. They have sent off to the C. for orders. To-morrow the decision ought to arrive, and then something will be done. Returned—dined—read—went out—talked over matters. Made a purchase of some arms for the new enrolled Americans, who are all on tiptoe to march. Gave order for some *harness* and pormanteaus necessary for the horses.

Read some of Bowles's dispute about Pope, with all the replies and rejoinders. Perceive that my name has been lugged into the controversy, but have not time to state what I know of the subject. On some 'piping day of peace' it is probable that I may resume it.

February 9, 1821

Before dinner wrote a little; also, before I rode out, Count P. G. called upon me, to let me know the result of the meeting of the Ci. at F. and at B. — returned late last night. Every thing was combined under the idea that the Barbarians would pass the Po on the 15th inst. Instead of this, from some previous information or otherwise, they have hastened their march and actually passed two days ago; so

that all that can be done at present in Romagna is, to stand on the alert and wait for the advance of the Neapolitans. Every thing was ready, and the Neapolitans had sent on their own instructions and intentions, all calculated for the *tenth* and *eleventh*, on which days a general rising was to take place, under the supposition that the Barbarians could not advance before the 15th.

As it is, they have but fifty or sixty thousand troops, a number with which they might as well attempt to conquer the world as secure Italy in its present state. The artillery marches *last*, and alone, and there is an idea of an attempt to cut part of them off. All this will much depend upon the first steps of the Neapolitans. *Here*, the public spirit is excellent, provided it be kept up. This will be seen by the event.

It is probable that Italy will be delivered from the Barbarians if the Neapolitans will but stand firm, and are united among themselves. *Here* they appear so.

February 10, 1821

'Day passed as usual—nothing new. Barbarians still in march—not well equipped, and, of course, not well received on their route. There is some talk of a commotion at Paris.

Rode out between four and six—finished my letter to Murray on Bowles's pamphlets—added postscript. Passed the evening as usual—out till eleven—and subsequently at home.

February 11, 1821

Wrote—had a copy taken of an extract from Petrarch's Letters, with reference to the conspiracy of the Doge, Marino Faliero containing the poet's opinion of the matter. Heard a heavy firing of cannon towards Comacchio—the Barbarians rejoicing for their principal pig's birthday, which is to-morrow—or Saint day—I forget which. Received a ticket for the first ball to-morrow. Shall not go to the first, but intend going to the second, as also to the Veglioni.

February 13, 1821

To-day read a little in Louis B.'s *Hollande*, but have written nothing since the completion of the letter on the Pope controversy. Politics are quite misty for the present. The Barbarians still upon their march. It is not easy to divine what the Italians will now do.

Was elected yesterday *Socio* of the Carnival Ball Society. This is the fifth carnival that I have passed. In the four former, I racketed a good deal. In the present, I have been as sober as Lady Grace herself.

February 14, 1821

Much as usual. Wrote, before riding out, part of a scene of *Sardanapalus*. The first act nearly finished. The rest of the day and evening as before—partly without, in conversazione—partly at home.

Heard the particulars of the late fray at Russi, a town not far from this. It is exactly the fact of Roméo and Giulietta—not Roméo, as the Barbarian writes it. Two families of *Contadini* (peasants) are at feud. At a ball, the younger part of the families forget their quarrel, and dance together. An old man of one of them enters, and reproves the young men for dancing with the females of the opposite family. The male relatives of the latter resent this. Both parties rush home and arm themselves. They meet directly, by moonlight, in the public way, and fight it out. Three are killed on the spot, and six wounded, most of them dangerously,—pretty well for two families, methinks—and all *fact*, of the last week. Another assassination has taken place at Cesenna,—in all about *forty* in Romagna within the last three months. These people retain much of the middle ages.

February 15, 1821

Last night finished the first act of *Sardanapalus*. To-night, or to-morrow, I ought to answer letters.

February 16, 1821

Last night Il Conte P. G. sent a man with a bag full of bayonets, some muskets, and some hundreds of cartridges to my house, without apprizing me, though I had seen him not half an hour before. About ten days ago, when there was to be a rising here, the Liberals and my brethren C^l. asked me to purchase some arms for a certain few of our ragamuffins. I did so immediately, and ordered ammunition, etc., and they were armed accordingly. Well—the rising is prevented by the Barbarians marching a week sooner than appointed; and an *order* is issued, and in force, by the Government, 'that all persons having arms concealed, etc., etc., shall be liable to, etc., etc.'—and what do my friends, the patriots, do two days afterwards? Why, they throw back upon my hands, and into my hotse, these very arms (without a word of warning previously) with which I had furnished them at their own request, and at my own peril and expense.

It was lucky that Lega was at home to receive them. If any of the servants had (except Tita and F. and Lega) they would have betrayed it immediately. In the mean time, if they are denounced or discovered, I shall be in a scrape.

At nine went out—at eleven returned. Beat the crowd for stealing

the falcon's victuals. Read *Tales of my Landlord*—wrote a letter—and mixed a moderate beaker of water with other ingredients.

February 18, 1821

The news are that the Neapolitans have broken a bridge, and slain four pontifical carabinieri, whilk carabinieri wished to oppose. Besides the disrespect to neutrality, it is a pity that the first blood shed in this German quarrel should be Italian. However, the war seems begun in good earnest: for, if the Neapolitans kill the Pope's carabinieri, they will not be more delicate towards the Barbarians. If it be even so, in a short time 'there will be news o' thae craws,' as Mrs. Alison Wilson says of Jenny Blane's 'unco cockernony' in the *Tales of my Landlord*.

In turning over Grimm's *Correspondence* to-day, I found a thought of Tom Moore's in a song of Maupertuis to a female Laplander

*Et tous les lieux
Où sont ses yeux,
Font la zone brûlante.*

This is Moore's,

And those eyes make my climate, wherever I roam.

But I am sure that Moore never saw it; for this was published in Grimm's *Correspondence*, in 1813, and I knew Moore's by heart in 1812. There is also another, but an antithetical coincidence—

*Le soleil luit,
Des jours sans nuit
Bientôt il nous destine;
Mais ces longs jours
Seront trop courts,
Passés près de Christine.*

This is the *thought reversed*, of the last stanza of the ballad on Charlotte Lynes, given in Miss Seward's *Memoirs of Darwin*, which is pretty—I quote from memory of these last fifteen years.

*For my first night I'd go
To those regions of snow,
Where the sun for six months never shines;
And think, even then,
He too soon came again,
To disturb me with fair Charlotte Lynes.*

To-day I have had no communication with my Carbonari cronies; but, in the mean time, my lower apartments are full of their bayonets, fusils, cartridges, and what not. I suppose that they consider me as a *dépôt*, to be sacrificed, in case of accidents. It is no great matter, supposing that Italy could be liberated, who or what is sacrificed. It is a grand object—the very *poetry* of politics. Only think—a free Italy!!! Why, there has been nothing like it since the days of Augustus. I reckon the times of Cæsar (Julius) free; because the commotions left every body a side to take, and the parties were pretty equal at the set out. But, afterwards, it was all prætorian and legionary business—and since!—we shall see, or, at least, some will see, what card will turn up. It is best to hope, even of the hopeless. The Dutch did more than these fellows have to do, in the Seventy Years' War.

February 19, 1821

Came home *solus*—very high wind—lightning—moonshine—solitary stragglers muffled in cloaks—women in masks—white houses—clouds hurrying over the sky, like spilt milk blown out of the pail—altogether very poetical. It is still blowing hard—the tiles flying, and the house rocking—rain splashing—lightning flashing—quite a fine Swiss Alpine evening, and the sea roaring in the distance.

Visited—*conversazione*. All the women frightened by the squall: they *won't* go to the masquerade because it lightens—the pious reason!

Still blowing away. A. has sent me some news to-day. The war approaches nearer and nearer. Oh those scoundrel sovereigns! Let us but see them beaten—let the Neapolitans but have the pluck of the Dutch of old, or the Spaniards of now, or of the German Protestants, the Scotch Presbyterians, the Swiss under Tell, or the Greeks under Themistocles—all small and solitary nations (except the Spaniards and German Lutherans), and there is yet a resurrection for Italy, and a hope for the world.

February 20, 1821

The news of the day are, that the Neapolitans are full of energy. The public spirit *here* is certainly well kept up. The *Americani* (a patriotic society here, an under branch of the Carbonari) give a dinner in *the Forest* in a few days, and have invited me, as one of the C! It is to be in *the Forest* of Boccaccio's and Dryden's 'Huntsman's Ghost;' and, even if I had not the same political feelings, (to say nothing of my old convivial turn, which every now and then revives,) I would go as a poet, or, at least, as a lover of poetry. I shall

expect to see the spectre of 'Ostasio degli Onesti' (Dryden has turned him into Guido Cavalcanti—an essentially different person, as may be found in Dante) come 'thundering for his prey in the midst of the festival'. At any rate, whether he does or no, I will get as tipsy and patriotic as possible.

Within these few days I have read, but not written.

February 21, 1821

As usual, rode—visited, etc. Business begins to thicken. The Pope has printed a declaration against the patriots, who, he says, meditate a rising. The consequence of all this will be, that, in a fortnight, the whole country will be up. The proclamation is not yet published, but printed, ready for distribution. — sent me a copy privately—a sign that he does not know what to think. When he wants to be well with the patriots, he sends to me some civil message or other.

For my own part, it seems to me, that nothing but the most decided success of the Barbarians can prevent a general and immediate rise of the whole nation.

February 23, 1821

Almost ditto with yesterday—rode, etc.—visited—wrote nothing—read Roman History.

Had a curious letter from a fellow, who informs me that the Barbarians are ill-disposed towards me. He is probably a spy, or an impostor. But be it so, even as he says. They cannot bestow their hostility on one who loathes and execrates them more than I do, or who will oppose their views with more zeal, when the opportunity offers.

February 24, 1821

Rode, etc. as usual. The secret intelligence arrived this morning from the frontier to the C^l. is as bad as possible. The *plan* has missed—the Chiefs are betrayed, military, as well as civil—and the Neapolitans not only have *not* moved, but have declared to the P. government, and to the Barbarians, that they know nothing of the matter!!!

Thus the world goes; and thus the Italians are always lost for lack of union among themselves. What is to be done *here*, between the two fires, and cut off from the Nⁿ. frontier, is not decided. My opinion was,—better to rise than be taken in detail; but how it will be settled now, I cannot tell. Messengers are despatched to the delegates of the other cities to learn their resolutions.

I always had an idea that it would be *bungled*; but was willing to hope, and am so still. Whatever I can do by money, means, or person,

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY

I will venture freely for their freedom; and have so repeated to them (some of the Chiefs here) half an hour ago. I have two thousand five hundred scudi, better than five hundred pounds, in the house, which I offered to begin with.

February 25, 1821

Came home—my head aches—plenty of news, but too tiresome to set down. I have neither read nor written, nor thought, but led a purely animal life all day. I mean to try to write a page or two before I go to bed. But, as Squire Sullen says, 'My head aches consumedly: Scrub, bring me a dram!' Drank some Imola wine, and some punch!

Log-book continued

February 27, 1821

I have been a day without continuing the log, because I could not find a blank book. At length I recollected this.

Rode, etc.—wrote down an additional stanza for the 5th canto of *D[on] J[uan]* which I had composed in bed this morning. Visited *l'Amica*. We are invited, on the night of the Veglione (next Dominica) with the Marchesa Clelia Cavalli and the Countess Spinelli Rusponi. I promised to go. Last night there was a row at the ball, of which I am a *socio*. The Vice-legate had the imprudent insolence to introduce three of his servants in masque—without tickets, too! and in spite of remonstrances. The consequence was, that the young men of the ball took it up, and were near throwing the Vice-legate out of the window. His servants, seeing the scene, withdrew, and he after them. His reverence Monsignore ought to know, that these are not times for the predominance of priests over decorum. Two minutes more, two steps further, and the whole city would have been in arms, and the government driven out of it.

Such is the spirit of the day, and these fellows appear not to perceive it. As far as the simple fact went, the young men were right, servants being prohibited always at these festivals.

Yesterday wrote two notes on the 'Bowles and Pope' controversy, and sent them off to Murray by the post. The old woman whom I relieved in the forest (she is ninety-four years of age) brought me two bunches of violets. *Nam vita gaudet mortua floribus*. I was much pleased with the present. An English woman would have presented a pair of worsted stockings, at least, in the month of February. Both excellent things; but the former are more elegant. The present, at this season, reminds one of Gray's stanza, omitted from his elegy:—

*Here scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
The red-breast loves to build and warble here,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.*

As fine a stanza as any in his elegy. I wonder that he could have the heart to omit it.

Last night I suffered horribly—from an indigestion, I believe. I *never* sup—that is, never at home. But, last night, I was prevailed upon by the Countess Gamba's persuasion, and the strenuous example of her brother, to swallow, at supper, a quantity of boiled cockles, and to dilute them, *not* reluctantly, with some Imola wine. When I came home, apprehensive of the consequences, I swallowed three or four glasses of spirits, which men (the venders) call brandy, rum, or hollands, but which gods would entitle spirits of wine, coloured or sugared. All was pretty well till I got to bed, when I became somewhat swollen, and considerably vertiginous. I got out, and mixing some soda-powders, drank them off. This brought on temporary relief. I returned to bed; but grew sick and sorry once and again. Took more soda-water. At last I fell into a dreary sleep. Woke, and was ill all day, till I had galloped a few miles. Query—was it the cockles, or what I took to correct them, that caused the commotion? I think both. I remarked in my illness the complete inaction, inaction, and destruction of my chief mental faculties. I tried to rouse them, and yet could not—and this is the *Soul!!!* I should believe that it was married to the body, if they did not sympathise so much with each other. If the one rose, when the other fell, it would be a sign that they longed for the natural state of divorce. But as it is, they seem to draw together like post-horses.

Let us hope the best—it is the grand possession.

Ravenna, May 1, 1821

Amongst various journals, memoranda, diaries, etc., which I have kept in the course of my living, I began one about three months ago, and carried it on till I had filled one paper-book (thinnish), and two sheets or so of another. I then left off, partly because I thought we should have some business here, and I had furbished up my arms, and got my apparatus ready for taking a turn with the Patriots, having my drawers full of their proclamations, oaths, and resolutions, and my lower rooms of their hidden weapons of most calibres; and partly because I had filled my paper book. But the Neapolitans have

MY DICTIONARY

betrayed themselves and all the World, and those who would have given their blood for Italy can now only give her their tears.

Some day or other, if dust holds together, I have been enough in the Secret (at least in this part of the country) to cast perhaps some little light upon the atrocious treachery which has replunged Italy into Barbarism. At present I have neither the time nor the temper. However, the *real* Italians are *not* to blame—merely the scoundrels at the *Heel of the Boot*, which the *Hun* now wears, and will trample them to ashes with for their Servility.

I have risked myself with the others *here*, and how far I may or may not be compromised is a problem at this moment: some of them like 'Craigengelt' would 'tell all and more than all to save themselves;' but, come what may, the cause was a glorious one, though it reads at present as if the Greeks had run away from Xerxes.

Happy the few who have only to reproach themselves with believing that these rascals were less *rascaille* than they proved. *Here* in Romagna the efforts were necessarily limited to preparations and good intentions, until the Germans were fairly engaged in *equal* warfare, as we are upon their very frontiers without a single fort, or hill, nearer than San Marino. Whether 'Hell will be paved with' those 'good intentions,' I know not; but there will probably be good store of Neapolitans to walk upon the pavement, whatever may be it's composition. Slabs of lava from their mountain, with the bodies of their own damned Souls for cement, would be the fittest causeway for Satan's *Corso*.

But what shall I write? another Journal? I think not. Anything that comes uppermost—and call it 'my Dictionary.'

MY DICTIONARY

Augustus.—I have often been puzzled with his character. Was he a great Man? Assuredly. But not one of *my* great men. I have always looked upon Sylla as the greatest Character in History, for laying down his power at the moment when it was

too great to keep or to resign,

and thus despising them all. As to the retention of his power by Augustus, the thing was already settled. If he had given it up, the Commonwealth was gone, the republic was long past all resuscitation. Had Brutus and Cassius gained the battle of Philippi, it would not have restored the republic—its days ended with the Gracchi, the rest was a mere struggle of parties. You might as well cure a Consumption

restore a broken egg, as revive a state so long a prey to every uppermost Soldier as Rome had long been.

As for a despotism, if Augustus could have been sure that all his Successors would have been like himself (I mean *not* as *Octavius*, but Augustus), or Napoleon would have insured the world that *none* of his Successors would have been like himself, the antient or modern World might have gone on like the Empire of China—in a state of lethargic prosperity.

Suppose, for instance, that, instead of Tiberius and Caligula, Augustus had been immediately succeeded by Nerva, Trajan, the Antonines, or even by Titus and his father, what a difference in our estimate of himself? So far from gaining by the *contrast*, I think that one half of our dislike arises from his having been heired by Tiberius, and one half of Julius Caesar's fame from his having had his empire consolidated by Augustus.

Suppose that there had been *no Octavius*, and Tiberius had 'jumped the life' between, and at once succeeded Julius? And yet it is difficult to say whether hereditary right, or popular choice, produce the worse Sovereigns. The Roman Consuls make a goodly show, but then they only reigned for a year, and were under a sort of personal obligation to distinguish themselves. It is still more difficult to say which form of Government is the *worst*—all are so bad. As for democracy, it is the worst of the whole; for what is (*in fact*) democracy? an Aristocracy of Blackguards.

ABERDEEN—OLD AND NEW, OR THE AULDTOUN AND NEWTOUN

For several years of my earliest childhood I was in that City, but have never revisited it since I was ten years old. I was sent at five years old, or earlier, to a School kept by a Mr. *Bowers*, who was called '*Bodsy Bowers*' by reason of his dapperiness. It was a School for both sexes. I learned little there, except to repeat by rote the first lesson of Monosyllables—'God made man, let us love him'—by hearing it often repeated, without acquiring a letter. Whenever proof was made of my progress at home, I repeated these words with the most rapid fluency; but on turning over a new leaf, I continued to repeat them, so that the narrow boundaries of my first year's accomplishments were detected, my ears boxed (which they did not deserve, seeing that it was by *ear* only that I had acquired my letters), and my intellects consigned to a new preceptor. He was a very decent, clever, little Clergyman, named Ross, afterwards Minister of one of the

Kirks (*East* I think). Under *him* I made an astonishing progress, and I recollect to this day his mild manners and good-natured painstaking.

The moment I could read, my grand passion was *history*; and why, I know not, but I was particularly taken with the battle near the Lake Regillus in the Roman History, put into my hands the first.

Four years ago, when standing on the heights of Tusculum, and looking down upon the little round Lake, that was once Regillus, and which dots the immense expanse below, I remembered my young enthusiasm and my old instructor.

Afterwards I had a very serious, saturnine, but kind young man, named Paterson, for a Tutor: he was the son of my Shoemaker, but a good Scholar, as is common with the Scotch. He was a rigid Presbyterian also. With him I began Latin in Ruddiman's Grammar, and continued till I went to the 'Grammar School' (*Scotice* 'Schule'—*Aberdonice* 'Squeel'), where I threaded all the Classes to the *fourth*, when I was recalled to England (where I had been hatched) by the demise of my Uncle.

I acquired this handwriting, which I can hardly read myself, under the fair copies of Mr. Duncan of the same city. I don't think that he would plume himself upon my progress. However, I wrote much better then than I have ever done since. Haste and agitation of one kind or another have quite spoilt as pretty a scrawl as ever scratched over a frank.

The Grammar School might consist of a hundred and fifty of all ages under age. It was divided into five classes, taught by four masters, the Chief teaching the fifth and fourth himself, as in England the fifth, sixth forms, and Monitors are heard by the Head Masters.

DETACHED THOUGHTS

Oct. 15, 1821

I have been thinking over the other day on the various comparisons, good or evil, which I have seen published of myself in different journals English and foreign. This was suggested to me by accidentally turning over a foreign one lately; for I have made it a rule latterly never to *search* for anything of the kind, but not to avoid the perusal if presented by Chance.

To begin then—I have seen myself compared personally or poetically, in English, French, *German* (as interpreted to me), Italian, and Portuguese, within these nine years, to Rousseau—Goethe—Young—Aretino—Timon of Athens—'An Alabaster Vase lighted up within'

— Satan — Shakespeare — Buonaparte — Tiberius — Aeschylus — Sophocles — Euripides — Harlequin — The Clown — Sternhold and Hopkins — to the Phantasmagoria — to Henry the 8th. — to Chénier — to Mirabeau — to young R. Dallas (the Schoolboy) — to Michael Angelo — to Raphael — to a *petit maître* — to Diogenes — to Childe Harold — to Lara — to the Count in Beppo — to Milton — to Pope — to Dryden — to Burns — to Savage — to Chatterton — to 'oft have I heard of thee my Lord Biron' in Shakespeare — to Churchill the poet — to Kean the Actor — to Alfieri, etc. etc. etc. The likeness to Alfieri was asserted very seriously by an Italian, who had known him in his younger days: it of course related merely to our apparent personal dispositions. He did not assert it to *me* (for we were not then good friends), but in society.

The Object of so many contradictory comparisons must probably be like something different from them all; but what *that* is, is more than I know, or any body else.

My Mother, before I was twenty, would have it that I was like Rousseau, and Madame de Staël used to say so too in 1813, and the *Edin^b. Review* has something of the sort in its critique on the 4th. Canto of *Che. Had.* I can't see any point of resemblance: he wrote prose, I verse: he was of the people, I of the Aristocracy: he was a philosopher, I am none: he published his first work at forty, I mine at eighteen: his first essay brought him universal applause, mine the contrary: he married his housekeeper, I could not keep house with my wife: he thought all the world in a plot against *him*, my little world seems to think *me* in a plot against it, if I may judge by their abuse in print and coterie: he liked Botany, I like flowers, and herbs, and trees, but know nothing of their pedigrees: he wrote Music, I limit my knowledge of it to what I catch by *Ear*—I never could learn any thing by *study*, not even a language, it was all by rote and ear and memory: he had a bad memory, I *had* at least an excellent one (ask Hodgson the poet, a good judge, for he has an astonishing one): he wrote with hesitation and care, I with rapidity and rarely with pains: *he* could never ride nor swim 'nor was cunning of fence,' I am an excellent swimmer, a decent though not at all a dashing rider (having staved in a rib at eighteen in the course of scampering), and was sufficient of fence—particularly of the Highland broad-sword; not a bad boxer when I could keep my temper, which was difficult, but which I strove to do ever since I knocked down Mr. Purling and put his knee-pan out (with the gloves on) in Angelo's and Jackson's rooms in 1806 during the sparring; and I was besides a very fair cricketer—one of the Harrow Eleven when we play[ed] against

Eton in 1805. Besides, Rousseau's way of life, his country, his manners, his whole character, were so very different, that I am at a loss to conceive how such a comparison could have arisen, as it has done three several times, and all in rather a remarkable manner. I forgot to say, that *he* was also short-sighted, and that hitherto my eyes have been the contrary to such a degree, that, in the largest theatre of Bologna, I distinguished and read some busts and inscriptions painted near the stage, from a box so distant, and so *darkly* lighted, that none of the company (composed of young and very bright-eyed people—some of them in the same box) could make out a letter, and thought it was a trick, though I had never been in that theatre before.

Altogether, I think myself justified in thinking the comparison not well founded. I don't say this out of pique, for Rousseau was a great man, and the thing if true were flattering enough; but I have no idea of being pleased with a chimera.

When I met old Courtenay,¹ the Orator, at Rogers the poet's in 1811-1812, I was much taken with the portly remains of his fine figure, and the still acute quickness of his conversation. It was *he* who silenced Flood in the English House by a crushing reply to a hasty débüt of the rival of Grattan in Ireland. I asked Courtenay (for I like to trace motives), if he had not some personal provocation; for the acrimony of his answer seemed to me (as I had read it) to involve it. Courtenay said 'he had—that when in Ireland (being an Irishman) at the *bar* of the Irish house of Commons that Flood had made a personal and unfair attack upon *himself*, who, not being a member of that house, could not defend himself; and that some years afterwards, the opportunity of retort offering in the English Parliament, he could not resist it.' He certainly repaid F. with interest, for Flood never made any figure, and only a speech or two afterwards in the E. H. of Commons. I must except, however, his speech on Reform in 1790, which 'Fox called the best he ever heard upon that Subject.'

When Fox was asked what he thought the best speech he had ever heard, he replied 'Sheridan's on the Impeachment of Hastings in the house of Commons' (*not* that in Westminster Hall). When asked

¹ John Courtenay, though private secretary to a Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, was not himself an Irishman.

what he thought of his *own* speech on the breaking out of the War? he replied 'that was a damned good speech too.'—From Ld. Holland.

3

When Sheridan made his famous speech already alluded to, Fox advised him to speak it over again in Westminster Hall on the trial, as nothing better *could* be made of the subject; but Sheridan made his new speech as different as possible, and, according to the best Judges, very inferior to the former, notwithstanding the laboured panegyric of Burke upon his *Colleague*.—Ld. H.

4

Burke spoilt his own speaking afterwards by an imitation of Sheridan's in Westminster Hall: this Speech he called always 'the grand desideratum, which was neither poetry nor eloquence, but something *better* than both.'

5

• I have never heard any one who fulfilled my Ideal of an Orator Grattan would have been near it but for his Harlequin delivery. Pitt, I never heard. Fox but once, and then he struck me as a debater which to me seems as different from an Orator as an Improvisatore or a versifier from a poet. Grey is great, but it is not oratory. Canning is sometimes very like one. Windham I did not admire, though all the world did: it seemed such sophistry. Whitbread¹ was the Demosthenes of bad taste and vulgar vehemence, but strong and English. Holland is impressive from sense and sincerity. Lord Lansdowne good, but still a debater only. Grenville I like vastly, if he would prune his speeches down to an hour's delivery. Burdett is sweet and silvery as Belial himself, and I think the greatest favourite in Pandemonium; at least I always heard the Country Gentlemen and the ministerial devilry praise his *speeches* upstairs, and run down from Bellamy's when he was upon his legs. I heard Bob. Milnes make his *second* speech: it made no impression. I like Ward—studied, but keen, and sometimes eloquent. Peel, my School and form-fellow (we sate within two of each other) strange to say I have never heard, though I often wished to do so; but, from what I remember of him at Harrow, he *is*, or *should* be, among the best of them. Now, I do *not* admire Mr. Wilberforce's speaking; it is nothing but a flow of words—'words, words alone.'

I doubt greatly if the English *have* any eloquence, properly so

* Sir Samuel Whitbread, member of a rich brewing family and prominent Whig.

called, and am inclined to think that the Irish *had* a great deal, and that the French *will* have, and have had in Mirabeau. Lord Chatham and Burke are the nearest approaches to Orators in England. I don't know what Erskine may have been at the *bar*, but in the house I wish him at the Bar once more. Lauderdale is shrill, and Scotch, and acute. Of Brougham I shall say nothing, as I have a personal feeling of dislike to the man.

But amongst all these—good, bad, and indifferent—I never heard the speech which was not too long for the auditors, and not very intelligible except here and there. The whole thing is a grand deception, and as tedious and tiresome as may be to those who must be often present. I heard Sheridan only once, and that briefly; but I liked his voice, his manner, and his wit: he is the only one of them I ever wished to hear at greater length. In society I have met him frequently: he was superb! He had a sort of liking for me, and never attacked me—at least to my face, and he did every body else—high names, and wits, and orators, some of them poets also. I have seen [him] cut up Whitbread, quiz Me. de Stael, annihilate Colman, and do little less by some others (whose names as friends I set not down), of good fame and abilities. Poor fellow! he got drunk very thoroughly and very soon. It occasionally fell to my lot to convoy him home—no sinecure, for he was so tipsy that I was obliged to put on his cock'd hat for him: to be sure it tumbled off again, and I was not myself so sober as to be able to pick it up again.

6

There was something odd about Sheridan. One day at a dinner he was slightly praising that pert pretender and impostor, Lyttelton¹ (The Parliament puppy, still alive, I believe). I took the liberty of differing from him: he turned round upon me, and said, 'Is that your real opinion?' I confirmed it. Then said he, 'Fortified by this concurrence, I beg leave to say that it in fact is also *my* opinion, and that he is a person whom I do absolutely and utterly despise, abhor, and detest.' He then launched out into a description of his despicable qualities, at some length, and with his usual wit, and evidently in earnest (for he hated Lyttelton). His former compliment had been drawn out by some preceding one, just as it's reverse was by my hinting that it was unmerited.

7

One day I saw him take up his own 'Monody on Garrick.' He

¹ The Lyttelton here mentioned was the third Lord Lyttelton, not 'the Wicked Lord Lyttelton,' author of *Poems by a Young Nobleman lately deceased*.

lighted upon the dedication to the Dowager Lady Spencer: on seeing it he flew into a rage, and exclaimed 'that it must be a forgery—that he had never dedicated anything of his to such a d——d canting b——h,' etc. etc. etc.; and so went on for half an hour abusing his own dedication, or at least the object of it. If all writers were equally sincere, it would be ludicrous.

8

He told me that, on the night of the grand success of his *S[chorl]* for *S[candal]*, he was knocked down and put into the watch house for making a row in the Street, and being found intoxicated by the watchmen.

9

Latterly, when found drunk one night in the kennel, and asked his *Namé* by the Watchmen, he answered '*Wilberforce*.'

The last time I met him was, I think, at Sir Gilbert Elliot's, where he was as quick as ever. No, it was not the last time: the last time was at Douglas Kd.'s I have met him in all places and parties—at Whitehall with the Melbournes, at the Marquis of Tavistock's, at Robins the Auctioneer's, at Sir Humphrey Davy's, at Sam Rogers's, in short, in most kinds of company, and always found him very convivial and delightful.

10

Sheridan's liking for me (whether he was not mystifying me I do not know; but Lady Ce. L. and others told me he said the same both before and after he knew me) was founded upon *English Bards and S. Reviewers*. He told me that he did not care about poetry (or about mine—at least, any but *that* poem of mine), but he was sure, from *that* and other symptoms, I should make an Orator, if I would but take to speaking, and grow a parliament man. He never ceased harping upon this to me, to the last; and I remember my old tutor Dr. Drury had the same notion when I was a *boy*: but it never was my turn of inclination to try. I spoke once or twice as all young peers do, as a kind of introduction into public life; but dissipation, shyness, haughty and reserved opinions, together with the short time I lived in England—after my majority (only about five years in all)—prevented me from resuming the experiment. As far as it went, it was not discouraging—particularly my *first* speech (I spoke three or four times in all); but just after it my poem of *Ce. Hd.* was published, and nobody ever thought about my *prose* afterwards: nor indeed did I; it became to me a secondary and neglected object, though I sometimes wonder to myself *if* I should have succeeded?

II

The Impression of Parliament upon me was that it's members are not formidable as *Speakers*, but very much so as an *audience*; because in so numerous a body there may be little Eloquence (after all there were but *two* thorough Orators in all Antiquity, and I suspect still *fewer* in modern times), but must be a leaven of thought and good sense sufficient to make them *know* what is right, though they can't express it nobly.

I2

Horne Tooke and Roscoe both are said to have declared, that they left Parliament with a higher opinion of its aggregate integrity and abilities than that with which they had entered it. The general amount of both in most parliaments is probably about the same, as also the number of *Speakers* and their *talent*. I except *Orators*, of course, because *they* are things of Ages and not of Septennial or triennial reunions.

Neither house ever struck me with more awe or respect than the same number of Turks in a Divan, or of Methodists in a barn would have done. Whatever diffidence or nervousness I felt (and I felt both in a great degree) arose from the number rather than the quality of the assemblage, and the thought rather of the *public without* than the persons within—knowing (as all know) that Cicero himself, and probably the Messiah, could never have alter'd the vote of a single Lord of the Bedchamber or Bishop.

I thought *our* house dull, but the other animating enough upon great days.

I2 [so repeated by Byron]

Sheridan dying was requested to undergo 'an Operation:' he replied that he had already submitted to *two*, which were enough for one man's life time. Being asked what they were, he answered, 'having his hair cut, and sitting for his picture.'

I3

Whenever an American requests to see me (which is *not* unfrequently), I comply: 1stly, because I respect a people who acquired their freedom by firmness without excess; and 2ndly, because these trans-atlantic visits, 'few and far between,' make me feel as if talking with Posterity from the other side of the Styx. In a century or two, the new English and Spanish Atlantides will be masters of the old

Countries in all probability, as Greece and Europe overcame their Mother Asia in the older, or earlier ages as they are called.

14

Sheridan was one day offered a bet by M. G. Lewis. 'I will bet you, Mr. Sheridan, a very large sum: I will bet you what you *owe me* as Manager, for my "Castle Spectre."' 'I never make *large bets*,' said Sheridan: 'but I will lay you a *very small* one; I will bet you *what it is worth*!'

15

Lewis, though a kind man, hated Sheridan; and we had some words upon that score when in Switzerland in 1816. Lewis afterwards sent me the following epigram upon Sheridan from Saint Maurice:—

*For worst abuse of finest parts
Was Misophil begotten;
There might indeed be blacker hearts,
But none could be more rotten.*

16

Lewis at Oatlands was observed one morning to have his eyes red, and his air sentimental: being asked why? replied, 'that when people said any thing *kind* to him, it affected him deeply; and just now the Duchess has said something *so kind* to me that . . . ' here 'tears began to flow' again. 'Never mind, Lewis,' said Col. Armstrong to him, 'never mind, don't cry. *She could not mean it.*'

17

Lewis was a good man, a clever man, but a bore, a damned bore, one may say. My only revenge or consolation used to be, setting him by the ears with some vivacious person who hated Bores, especially Me. de Stael, or Hobhouse, for example. But I liked Lewis: he was a Jewel of a Man had he been better set. I don't mean *personally*, but less *tiresome*; for he was tedious, as well as contradictory, to every thing and every body.

Being short-sighted, when we used to ride out together near the Brenta in the twilight in Summer, he made me go *before* to pilot him. I am absent at times, especially towards evening; and the consequence of this pilotage was some narrow escapes to the Monk on horseback. Once I led him *into* a ditch, over which I had passed as usual forgetting to warn my convoy. Once I led him nearly into the river.

instead of *on* the *moveable* bridge which *incommodes* passengers; and twice did we both run against the diligence, which, being heavy and slow, did communicate less damage than it received in its leaders, who were *terrassé'd* by the charge. Thrice did I lose him in the gray of the Gloaming, and was obliged to bring to to his distant signals of distance and distress. All the time he went on talking without intermission, for he was a man of many words.

Poor fellow, he died, a martyr to his new riches, of a second visit to Jamaica—

*I'll give the lands of Deloraine
Dark Musgrave were alive again!*

that is

I would give many a Sugar Cane
Monk Lewis were alive again!

18

Lewis said to me, 'Why do you talk *Venetian*,' (such as I could talk, not very fine to be sure) 'to the Venetians? and not the usual Italian?' I answered, partly from habit, and partly to be understood, if possible. 'It may be so,' said Lewis, 'but it sounds to me like talking with a *brogue* to an *Irishman*.'

19

Baillie (commonly called Long Baillie, a very clever man, but odd), complained in riding to our friend Scrope B. Davies, 'that he had a *stitch* in his side.' 'I don't wonder at it' (said Scrope) 'for you ride *like a tailor*.' Whoever had seen B. on horseback, with his very tall figure on a small nag, would not deny the justice of the repartée.

20

In 1808, Scrope and myself being at Supper at Steevens's (I think Hobhouse was there too) after the Opera, young Goulburne (of the Blues and of the Blueviad) came in full of the praises of his horse, Grimaldi, who had just won a race at Newmarket. 'Did he win easy?' said Scrope. 'Sir,' replied Goulburne, 'he did not even condescend to *puff* at coming in.' 'No' (said Scrope) 'and so *you puff* for him.'

21

Captain Wallace, a notorious character of that day, and *then* intimate with most of the more dissipated young men of *the* day, asked

me one night at the Gaming table, where I thought *his Soul* would be found after death? I answered him, 'In *Silver Hell*' (a cant name for a second rate Gambling house).

22

When the Honble. J. W. Ward quitted the Whigs, he facetiously demanded, at Sir James Macintosh's table, in the presence of Made. de Staël, Malthus, and a large and goodly company of all parties and countries, 'what it would take to *re-whig him*, as he thought of turning again.' 'Before you can be *re-whigged*' (said I), 'I am afraid you must be *re-Warded*.' This pun has been attributed to others; they are welcome to it; but it was mine notwithstanding, as a numerous company and Ward himself doth know. I believe Luttrell versified it afterwards to put into the *M. Chronicle*—at least the late Lady Melbourne told me so. Ward took it good-humouredly at the time.

23

'When Sheridan was on his death-bed, Rogers aided him with purse and person: this was particularly kind in Rogers, who always spoke ill of Sheridan (to me at least); but indeed he does that of every-body to any body. Rogers is the reverse of the line

The best good man with the worst natured Muse,
being

The worst good man with the best natured Muse.

His Muse being all Sentiment and Sago and Sugar, while he himself is a venomous talker. I say '*worst good man*' because he is (perhaps) a *good* man—at least he does good now and then, as well he may, to purchase himself a shilling's worth of Salvation for his Slanders. They are so *little* too—small talk, and old Womanny; and he is malignant too, and envious, and—he be damned!

24

Curran!¹ Curran's the Man who struck me most. Such Imagination! There never was any thing like it, that ever I saw or heard of. His *published* life, his published speeches, give you *no* idea of the Man—none at all. He was a *Machine* of Imagination, as some one said that Piron was an 'Epigrammatic Machine.'

¹ John Curran, the Irish patriot, had transferred his activities to Westminster after the disappearance of the Irish Parliament. He was a fine orator, brilliant talker and an irrepressible mimic.

I did not see a great deal of Curran—only in 1813; but I met him at home (for he used to call on me), and in society, at Mac'Intosh's, Holland House, etc. etc. etc., and he was wonderful, even to me, who had seen many remarkable men of the time.

25

A young American, named Coolidge, called on me not many months ago: he was intelligent, very handsome, and not more than twenty years old according to appearances. A little romantic, but that sits well upon youth, and mighty fond of poesy as may be suspected from his approaching me in my cavern. He brought me a message from an old Servant of my family (Joe Murray), and told me that *he* (Mr. Coolidge) had obtained a copy of my bust from Thorwal[d]sen at Rome, to send to America. I confess I was more flattered by this young enthusiasm of a solitary trans-atlantic traveller, than if they had decreed me a Statue in the Paris Pantheon. (I have seen Emperors and demagogues cast down from their pedestals even in my own time, and Grattan's name razed from the Street called after him* in Dublin.) I say that I was more flattered by it, because it was *single*, *un-political*, and was without motive or ostentation—the pure and warm feeling of a boy for the poet he admired. It must have been expensive though. I would not pay the price of a Thorwaldsen bust for any human head and shoulders, except Napoleon's, or my children's, or some '*absurd Womankind's*' as Monkbarns calls them, or my Sister's. If asked, *why* then I sat for my own—answer, that it was at the request particular of J. C. Hobhouse, Esqre., and for no one else. A *picture* is a different matter—every body sits for their picture; but a bust looks like putting up pretensions to permanency, and smacks something of a hankering for *public* fame rather than private remembrance.

26

One of the cleverest men I ever knew in Conversation was Scrope Beardmore Davies. Hobhouse is also very good in that line, though it is of less consequence to a man who has other ways of showing his talents than in company. Scrope was always ready, and often witty: Hobhouse as witty, but not always so ready, being more diffident.

27

A drunken man ran against Hobhouse in the Street. A companion of the Drunkard, not much less so, cried out to Hobhouse, '*An't* you ashamed to run against a drunken man? couldn't you see that he was

drunk? 'Damn him' (answered Hobhouse) 'isn't *he* ashamed to run against *me*? couldn't he see that *I was sober?*'

28

When Brummell was obliged (by that affair of poor Meyler, who thence acquired the name of 'Dick the Dandy-killer'—it was about money and debt and all that) to retire to France, he knew no French; and having obtained a Grammar for the purposes of Study, our friend Scrope Davies was asked what progress Brummell had made in French, to which he responded, 'that B. had been stopped like Buonaparte in Russia by the *Elements*.' I have put this pun into 'Beppo,' which is 'a fair exchange and no robbery;' for Scrope made his fortune at several dinners (as he owned himself), by repeating occasionally as his own some of the buffooneries with which I had encountered him in the Morning.

29

I liked the Dandies; they were always very civil to *me*, though in general they disliked literary people, and persecuted and mystified Me. de Staël, Lewis, Horace Twiss, and the like, damnably. They persuaded Me. de Staël that Alvanley¹ had a hundred thousand a year, etc. etc., till she praised him to his *face* for his *beauty*! and made a set at him for Albertine (*Libertine*, as Brummell baptized her, though the poor Girl was and is as correct as maid or wife can be, and very amiable withal), and a hundred fooleries besides.

The truth is, that, though I gave up the business early, I had a tinge of Dandyism in my minority, and probably retained enough of it, to conciliate the great ones; at four and twenty. I had gamed, and drank, and taken my degrees in most dissipations; and having no pedantry, and not being overbearing, we ran quietly together. I knew them all more or less, and they made me a Member of Watier's (a superb Club at that time), being, I take it, the only literary man (except *two others*, both men of the world, M. and S.) in it.

Our Masquerade was a grand one; so was the Dandy Ball, too, at the Argyle, but *that* (the latter) was given by the four Chiefs, B., M., A., and P., if I err not.

30

I was a Member of the Alfred too, being elected while in Greece. It was pleasant—a little too sober and literary, and bored with

¹ For a superb impression of Lord Alvanley see Dighton's celebrated caricature, *Going to White's*.

Sotheby and Sir Francis D'Ivernois! but one met Peel, and Ward, and Valentia, and many other pleasant or known people; and was upon the whole a decent resource on a rainy day, in a dearth of parties, or parliament, or an empty season.

31

I belonged, or belong, to the following Clubs or Societies:—to the Alfred, to the Cocoa tree, to Watier's, to the Union, to Racket's (at Brighton), to the Pugilistic, to the Owls or 'Fly by Night,' to the Cambridge Whig Club, to the Harrow Club, Cambridge, and to one or two private Clubs, to the Hampden political Club, and to the Italian Carbonari, etc. etc. etc., 'though last *not least*.' I got into all these, and never stood for any other—at least to my own knowledge. I declined being proposed to several others; though pressed to stand Candidate.

32

If the papers lie not (which they generally do), Demetrius Zografio of Athens is at the head of the Athenian part of the present Greek Insurrection. He was my Servant in 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, at different intervals in those years (for I left him in Greece when I went to Constantinople), and accompanied me to England in 1811. He returned to Greece, Spring 1812. He was a clever, but not *apparently* an enterprising, man; but Circumstances make men. His two sons (*then* infants) were named Miltiades and Alcibiades. May the Omen be happy!

33

I have a notion that Gamblers are as happy as most people, being always *excited*.¹ Women, wine, fame, the table, even Ambition, *sate* now and then; but every turn of the card, and cast of the dice, keeps the Gamester alive: besides one can Game ten times longer than one can do any thing else.

I was very fond of it when young, that is to say, of 'Hazard;' for I hate all Card Games, even Faro. When Macco (or whatever they spell it) was introduced, I gave up the whole thing; for I loved and missed the *rattle* and *dash* of the box and dice, and the glorious uncertainty, not only of good luck or bad luck, but of *any luck at all*, as one had sometimes to throw *often* to decide at all.

¹ Compare this sentence with *Don Juan*:

The best of life is but intoxication

and Lady Byron's remark to Mrs. Leigh, that Byron's undoing was his 'habitual passion for excitement.'

I have thrown as many as fourteen mains running, and carried off all the cash upon the table occasionally; but I had no coolness or judgement or calculation. It was the *delight* of the thing that pleased me. Upon the whole, I left off in time without being much a winner or loser. Since one and twenty years of age, I played but little, and then never above a hundred or two, or three.

34

As far as Fame goes (that is to say *living* Fame) I have had my share—perhaps, indeed, *certainly* more than my *deserts*. Some odd instances have occurred to my own experience of the wild and strange places, to which a name may penetrate, and where it may impress. Two years ago (almost three, being in August or July 1819), I received at Ravenna a letter in *English* verse from *Drontheim* in Norway, written by a Norwegian, and full of the usual compliments, etc. etc. It is still somewhere amongst my papers. In the same month, I received an invitation into *Holstein* from a Mr. Jacobsen (I think), of *Hamburgh*; also (by the same medium), a translation of Medora's song in the 'Corsair' by a Westphalian Baroness (not 'Thunderton-tronck'), with some original verses of hers (very pretty and Klopstockish), and a prose translation annexed to them, on the subject of my wife. As they concerned *her* more than me, I sent them to her together with Mr. J.'s letter. It was odd enough to receive an invitation to pass the *summer* in *Holstein*, while in *Italy*, from people I never knew. The letter was addressed to Venice. Mr. J. talked to me of the 'wild roses growing in the Holstein summer:' why then did the Cimbri and Teutones emigrate?

What a strange thing is life and man? Were I to present myself at the door of the house, where my daughter now is, the door would be shut in my face, unless (as is not impossible) I knocked down the porter; and if I had gone in that year (and perhaps now) to *Drontheim* (the furthest town in Norway), or into *Holstein*, I should have been received with open arms into the mansions of Strangers and foreigners, attached to me by no tie but that of mind and rumour.

As far as *Fame* goes, I have had my share: it has indeed been leavened by other human contingencies, and this in a greater degree than has occurred to most literary men of a *decent* rank in life; but on the whole I take it that such equipoise is the condition of humanity.

I doubt sometimes whether, after all, a quiet and unagitated life would have suited me: yet I sometimes long for it. My earliest dreams (as most boys' dreams are) were martial; but a little later they were all for *love* and retirement, till the hopeless attachment to M. C.

began, and continued (though sedulously concealed) *very* early in my teens; and so upwards for a time. *This* threw me out again 'alone on a wide, wide sea.'

In the year 1804, I recollect meeting my Sister at General Harcourt's in Portland Place. I was then *one* thing, and as she had always till then found me. When we met again in 1805 (she told me since), that my temper and disposition were so completely altered, that I was hardly to be recognized. I was not then sensible of the change, but I can believe it, and account for it.

35

A private play being got up at Cambridge, a Mr. *Tulk*, greatly to the inconvenience of Actors and audience, declined his part on a sudden, so that it was necessary to make an apology to the Company. In doing this, Hobhouse (indignant like all the rest at this inopportune caprice of the Seceder) stated to the audience 'that in consequence of a Mr. Tulk having unexpectedly thrown up his part, they must request their indulgence, etc. etc. Next day, the furious Tulk demanded of Hobhouse, 'did you, Sir, or did you not use *that* expression?' 'Sir,' (said Hobhouse) 'I *did* or *did not* use that expression.' 'Perhaps' (said Scrope Davies, who was present), 'you object to the *indefinite* article, and prefer being entitled *the* Mr. Tulk?' The Tulk eyed Scrope indignantly; but aware, probably, that the said Scrope, besides being a profane jester, had the misfortune to be a very good shot, and had already fought two or three duels, he retired without further objections to either article, except a conditional menace—if he should ascertain that an intention, etc. etc. etc.

36

I have been called in as Mediator or Second at least twenty times in violent quarrels, and have always contrived to settle the business without compromising the honour of the parties, or leading them to mortal consequences; and this too sometimes in very difficult and delicate circumstances, and having to deal with very hot and haughty Spirits—Irishmen, Gamesters, Guardsmen, Captains and Cornets of horse, and the like. This was of course in my youth, when I lived in hot-headed company. I have had to carry challenges from Gentlemen to Noblemen, from Captains to Captains, from lawyers to Counsellors, and once from a Clergyman to an officer in the Lifeguards. It may seem strange, but I found the latter by far the most difficult

... to compose
The bloody duel without blows.

The business being about a woman. I must add too that I never saw a woman behave so ill, like a cold-blooded heartless whore as she was; but very handsome for all that. A certain Susan C. was she called. I never saw her but once, and that was to induce her but to say two words (which in no degree compromised herself), and which would have had the effect of saving a priest or a Lieutenant of Cavalry. She would *not* say them, and neither N. or myself (the Son of Sir E. N., and a friend of one of the parties) could prevail upon her to say them, though both of us used to deal in some sort with Womankind. At last I managed to quiet the combatants without her talisman, and, I believe, to her great disappointment. She was the d——st b——h that I ever saw, and I have seen a great many. Though my Clergyman was sure to lose either his life or his living, he was as warlike as the Bishop of Beauvais, and would hardly be pacified: but then he was in love, and that is a martial passion.

37

[Scrawled out by Byron]

38

Somebody asked Schlegel (the Dousterswivel of Madame de Stael) 'whether he did not think *Canova* a great Sculptor?' 'Ah!' replied the modest Prussian, 'did you ever see *my bust* by *Tiecke*?'

39

At Venice, in the year 1817, an order came from Vienna for the Archbishop to go in State to Saint Mark's in his Carriage and four horses, which is much the same as commanding the Lord Mayor of London to proceed through Temple Bar in his Barge.

40

When I met Hudson Lowe, the Jailor, at Lord Holland's, before he sailed for Saint Helena, the discourse turned on the battle of Waterloo. I asked him whether the dispositions of Napoleon were those of a great General: he answered disparagingly, 'that they were very *simple*.' I had always thought that a degree of Simplicity was an ingredient of Greatness.

41

I was much struck with the simplicity of Grattan's manners in private life: they were odd, but they were natural. Curran used to take him off bowing to the very ground, and 'thanking God that he had no peculiarities of gesture or appearance,' in a way irresistibly ludicrous. And Rogers used to call him 'a Sentimental Harlequin;' but Rogers back-bites every body; and Curran, who used to quiz his great friend Godwin to his very face, would hardly respect a fair mark of mimicry in another. To be sure, Curran *was* admirable! To hear his description of the examination of an Irish witness, was next to hearing his own speeches: the latter I never heard, but I have the former.

42

I have heard that, when Grattan made his first speech in the English Commons, it was for some minutes doubtful whether to laugh at or cheer him. The débüt of his predecessor, Flood, had been a complete failure, under nearly similar circumstances. But when the ministerial part of our Senators had watched Pitt (their thermometer) for their cue, and saw him nod repeatedly his stately nod of approbation, they took the hint from their huntsman, and broke out into the most rapturous cheers. Grattan's speech indeed deserved them: it was a *chef d'œuvre*. I did not hear *that* speech of his (being then at Harrow), but heard most of his others on the same question; also that on the war of 1815. I differed from his opinion on the latter question, but coincided in the general admiration of his eloquence.

43

At the Opposition Meeting of the peers in 1812 at Lord Grenville's, when Ld. Grey and he read to us the correspondence upon Moira's negociation, I sate next to the present Duke of Grafton. When it was over, I turned to him, and said, 'What is to be done next?' 'Wake the Duke of Norfolk' (who was snoring near us) replied he, 'I don't think the Negotiators have left anything else for us to do this turn.'

44

In the debate, or rather discussion, afterwards in the House of Lords upon that very question, I sate immediately behind Lord Moira, who was extremely annoyed at G.'s speech upon the subject, and while G. was speaking, turned round to me repeatedly, and asked me whether I agreed with him? It was an awkward question to

me who had not heard both sides. Moira kept repeating to me, 'it was *not* so, it was so and so, etc.' I did not know very well what to think, but I sympathized with the acuteness of his feelings upon the subject.

45

Lord Eldon affects an Imitation of two very different Chancellors, Thurlow and Loughborough, and can indulge in an oath now and then. On one of the debates on the Catholic question, when we were either equal or within one (I forget which), I had been sent for in great haste to a Ball, which I quitted, I confess, somewhat reluctantly, to emancipate five Millions of people. I came in late, and did not go immediately into the body of the house, but stood just behind the Woolsack. Eldon turned round, and, catching my eye, immediately said to a peer (who had come to him for a few minutes on the Woolsack, as is the custom of his friends), 'Damn them! they'll have it now, by G—d! The vote that is just come in will give it them.'

46

When I came of age, some delays on account of some birth and marriage certificates from Cornwall occasioned me not to take my seat for several weeks. When these were over, and I had taken the Oaths, the Chancellor apologized to me for the delay, observing 'that these forms were a part of his *duty*.' I begged of him to make no apology, and added (as he certainly had shown no violent hurry) 'Your Lordship was exactly like "Tom Thumb" (which was then being acted), You did your *duty*, and you did *no more*.'

47

In a certain Capital abroad, the Minister's Secretary (the Minister being then absent) was piqued that I did not call upon him. When I was going away, Mr. W., an acquaintance of mine, applied to him for my passport, which was sent, but at the same time accompanied by a formal note from the Secretary stating 'that at *Mr. W.'s request* he had granted, etc.,' and in such a manner as appeared to *hint* that it was only to oblige *Mr. W.* that he had given me that which in fact he had no right to refuse to Any-body. I wrote to him the following answer:—'Lord B. presents his Compliments to L., and is extremely obliged to *Mr. W.* for the passport.'

48

There was a Madman of the name of Battersby, that frequented

Steevens's and the Prince of Wales's Coffee-houses; about the time when I was leading a loose life about town, before I was of age. One night he came up to some hapless Stranger, whose coat was not to his liking, and said, 'Pray, Sir, did the tailor cut your coat in that fashion, or the rats gnaw it?'

49

The following is (I believe) better known. A beau (*dandies* were not then christened) came into the P. of W.'s, and exclaimed, 'Waiter, bring me a glass of Madeira Negus with a Jelly, and rub my plate with a Chalotte.' This in a very soft tone of voice. A Lieutenant of the Navy, who sate in the next box, immediately roared out the following rough parody: 'Waiter, bring me a glass of d—d stiff Grog, and rub . . . with a brick-bat.'

50

Sotheby is a good man, rhymes well (if not wisely), but is a bore. He seizes you by the button. One night of a route at Mrs. Hope's, he had fastened upon me (something about Agamemnon, or Orestes, or some of his plays), notwithstanding my symptoms of manifest distress (for I was in love, and had just nicked a minute, when neither mothers, nor husbands, nor rivals, nor gossips, were near my then idol, who was beautiful as the Statues of the Gallery where we stood at the time)—Sotheby I say had seized upon me by the button and the heart-strings, and spared neither. W. Spencer, who likes fun, and don't dislike mischief, saw my case, and coming up to us both, took me by the hand, and pathetically bade me farewell: 'for,' said he, 'I see it is all over with you.' Sotheby then went away. 'Sic me servavit Apollo.'

51

It is singular how soon we lose the impression of what ceases to be *constantly* before us. A year impairs, a lustre obliterates. There is little distinct left without an *effort* of memory: *then* indeed the lights are rekindled for a moment; but who can be sure that Imagination is not the torch-bearer? Let any man try at the end of *ten* years to bring before him the features, or the mind, or the sayings, or the habits, of his best friend, or his *greatest* man (I mean his favourite—his Buonaparte, his this, that or 'tother), and he will be surprized at the extreme confusion of his ideas. I speak confidently on this point, having always past for one who had a good, aye, an excellent memory. I except indeed our recollections of Womankind: there is no forgetting

them (and be d—d to them) any more than any other remarkable Era, such as 'the revolution,' or 'the plague,' or 'the Invasion,' or 'the Comet,' or 'the War' of such and such an Epoch—being the favourite dates of Mankind, who have so many *blessings* in their lot, that they never make their Calendars from them, being too common. For instance, you see 'the great drought,' 'the Thames frozen over,' 'the Seven years war broke out,' the E. or F. or S. 'Revolution commenced,' 'The Lisbon Earthquake,' 'the Lima Earthquake,' 'The Earthquake of Calabria,' the 'Plague of London,' 'Ditto of Constantinople,' 'the Sweating Sickness,' 'The Yellow fever of Philadelphia,' etc. etc. etc.; but you don't see 'the abundant harvest,' 'the fine Summer,' 'the long peace,' 'the wealthy speculation,' the 'wreckless voyage,' recorded so emphatically? By the way, there has been a *thirty years war*, and a *Seventy years war*: was there ever a *Seventy* or a *thirty years Peace*? Or was there ever even a *day's Universal* peace, except perhaps in China, where they have found out the miserable happiness of a stationary and unwarlike mediocrity? And is all this, because Nature is niggard or savage? or Mankind ungrateful? Let philosophers decide. I am none.

52

In the year 1814, as Moore and I were going to dine with Lord Grey in P. Square, I pulled out a 'Java Gazette' (which Murray had sent to me), in which there was a controversy on our respective merits as poets. It was amusing enough that we should be proceeding peaceably to the same table, while they were squabbling about us in the Indian Seas (to be sure, the paper was dated six months before), and filling columns with Batavian Criticism. But this is fame, I presume.

53

In general, I do not draw well with literary men: not that I dislike them, but I never know what to say to them after I have praised their last publication. There are several exceptions, to be sure; but then they have either been men of the world, such as Scott, and Moore, etc., or visionaries out of it, such as Shelley, etc.: but your literary every day man and I never went well in company—especially your foreigner, whom I never could abide. Except Giordani, and—and—and—(I really can't name any other) I do not remember a man amongst them, whom I ever wished to see twice, except perhaps Mezzophant, who is a Monster of Languages, the Briareus of parts of

Speech, a walking Polyglott and more, who ought to have existed at the time of the tower of Babel as universal Interpreter. He is indeed a Marvel—unassuming also: I tried him in all the tongues of which I knew a single oath (or adjuration to the Gods against Postboys, Lawyers, Tartars, boatmen, Sailors, pilots, Gondoliers, Muleteers, Camel-drivers, Vetturini, Post-masters, post-horses, post-houses, post-everything), and Egad! he astounded me even to my English.

54

Three Swedes came to Bologna, knowing no tongue but Swedish. The inhabitants in despair presented them to Mezzophanti. Mezzophanti (though a great Linguist) knew no more Swedish than the inhabitants. But in two days, by dint of dictionary, he talked with them fluently and freely, so that they were astonished, and every body else, at his acquisition of another tongue in forty eight hours. I had this anecdote first from Me. Albrizzi, and afterwards confirmed by *himself*—and he is not a boaster.

55

I sometimes wish that I had studied languages with more attention: those which I know, even the classical (Greek and Latin, in the usual proportion of a sixth form boy), and a smattering of modern Greek, the Armenian and Arabic Alphabets, a few Turkish and Albanian phrases, oaths, or requests, Italian tolerably, Spanish less than tolerably, French to read with ease but speak with difficulty—or rather not at all—all have been acquired by ear or eye, and never by anything like Study. Like 'Eddie Ochiltree,' 'I never dowed to bid a hard turn o' wark in my life.'

To be sure, I set in zealously for the Armenian and Arabic, but I fell in love with some absurd womankind both times, before I had overcome the Characters; and at Malta and Venice left the profitable Orientalists for—for—(no matter what), notwithstanding that my master, the Padre Pasquale Aucher (for whom, by the way, I compiled the major part of two Armenian and English Grammars), assured me 'that the terrestrial Paradise had been certainly in *Armenia*.' I went seeking it—God knows where—did I find it? Umph! Now and then, for a minute or two.

56

Of Actors, Cooke was the most natural, Kemble the most supernatural, Kean a medium between the two, but Mrs. Siddons worth

them all put together, of those whom I remember to have seen in England.

57

I have seen Sheridan weep two or three times: it may be that he was maudlin; but this only renders it more impressive, for who would see—

*From Marlborough's eyes the tears of dotage flow,
And Swift expire a driveller and a shov?*

Once I saw him cry at Robins's, the Auctioneer's, after a splendid dinner full of great names and high Spirits. I had the honour of sitting next to Sheridan. The occasion of his tears was some observation or other upon the subject of the sturdiness of the Whigs in resisting Office, and keeping to their principles, Sheridan turned round—'Sir, it is easy for my Lord G., or Earl G., or Marquis B., or Ld. H., with thousands upon thousands a year—some of it either *presently* derived, or *inherited* in *Sinecures* or acquisitions from the public money—to boast of their patriotism, and keep aloof from temptation; but they do not know from what temptations those have kept aloof, who had equal pride—at least equal talents, and not unequal passions, and nevertheless knew not in the course of their lives what it was to have a shilling of their own.' And in saying this he wept.

58

I have more than once heard Sheridan say, that he never 'had a shilling of his own:' to be sure, he contrived to extract a good many of other people's.

In 1815, I had occasion to visit my Lawyer in Chancery Lane: he was with Sheridan. After mutual greetings, etc., Sheridan retired first. Before recurring to my own business, I could not help enquiring *that* of S. 'Oh' (replied the Attorneo), 'the usual thing—to stave off an action from his Wine-Merchant, my Client.' 'Well' (said I) 'and what do you mean to do?' 'Nothing at all for the present,' said he: 'would you have us proceed against old Sherry? What would be the use of it?' And here he began laughing, and going over Sheridan's good gifts of Conversation. Now, from personal experience, I can vouch that my Attorneo is by no means the tenderest of men, or particularly accessible to any kind of impression out of the Statute or record. And yet Sheridan, in half an hour, had found the way to soften and seduce him in such a manner, that I almost think he would

have thrown his Client (an honest man with all the laws and some justice on his side) out of the window, had he come in at the moment. Such was Sheridan! He could soften an Attorney! There has been nothing like it since the days of Orpheus.

59

When the Bailiffs (for I have seen most kinds of life) came upon me in 1815, to seize my chattels (being a peer of parliament my person was beyond him), being curious (as is my habit), I first asked him 'what Extents elsewhere he had for Government?' upon which he showed me one upon *one house only for seventy thousand pounds!* Next I asked him, if he had nothing for Sheridan? 'Oh, Sheridan,' said he: 'aye, I have this' (pulling out a pocket-book, etc.). 'But, my L., I have been in Mr. Sheridan's house a twelve-month at a time: a civil gentleman—knows how to deal with us, etc. etc. etc.' Our own business was then discussed, which was none of the easiest for me at that time. But the Man was civil, and, (what I valued more), communicative. I had met many of his brethren years before in affairs of my friends (commoners, that is), but this was the first (or second) on my own account. A civil Man; feed accordingly: probably he anticipated as much.

60

No man would live his life over again, is an old and true saying, which all can resolve for themselves. At the same time, there are probably *moments* in most men's lives, which they would live over the rest of life to *regain*? Else, why do we live at all? Because Hope recurs to Memory, both false; but—but—but—but—and this *but* drags on till—What? I do not know, and who does? 'He that died o' Wednesday.' By the way, there is a poor devil to be shot tomorrow here (Ravenna) for murder. He hath eaten half a Turkey for his dinner, besides fruit and pudding; and he refuses to confess? Shall I go to see him exhale? No. And why? Because it is to take place at *Nine*. Now, could I *save* him, or a fly even from the same catastrophe, I would out-match years; but as I cannot, I will not get up earlier to see another man shot, than I would to run the same risk in person. Besides, I have seen more men than one die that death (and other deaths) before to-day.

It is not cruelty which actuates mankind, but excitement, on such

occasions; at least, I suppose so. It is detestable to *take* life in that way, unless it be to preserve two lives.

61

Old Edgeworth, the fourth or fifth Mrs. Edgeworth, and *the* Miss Edgeworth were in London, 1813. Miss Edgeworth liked, Mrs. Edgeworth not disliked, old Edgeworth a bore—the worst of bores—a boisterous Bore. I met them in society once at a breakfast of Sir H. D., Old Edgeworth came in late, boasting that he had given ‘Dr. Parr a dressing the night before’ (no such easy matter by the way). I thought *her* pleasant. They all abused Anna Seward’s memory.

62

When, on the road, they heard of *her* brother’s, and *his* Son’s’ death. What was to be done? Their *London* Apparel was all ordered and made! So they sunk his death for the six weeks of their Sojourn and went into mourning on their way back to Ireland. *Fact!*

63

While the Colony were in London, there was a book, with a Subscription for the ‘recall of Mrs. Siddons to the Stage,’ going about for signatures. Moore moved for a similar subscription for the ‘recall of *Mr. Edgeworth to Ireland!*’

64

Sir Humphrey Davy told me, that the Scene of the French Valet and Irish postboy in ‘*Ennui*’ was taken from *his* verbal description to the Edgeworths in Edgeworthstown of a similar fact on the road occurring to himself. So much the better—being *life*.

65

When I was fifteen years of age, it happened that in a Cavern in Derbyshire I had to cross in a boat (in which two people only could lie down) a stream which flows under a rock, with the rock so close upon the water, as to admit the boat only to be pushed on by a ferry-man (a sort of Charon), who wades at the stern stooping all the time. The Companion of my transit was M. A. C., with whom I had been long in love, and never told it, though *she* had discovered it without. I recollect my sensations, but cannot describe them—and it is as well.

We were a party—a Mr. W., two Miss W.’s, Mr. and Mrs.

Cl—ke, Miss M., and my M. A. C.¹ Alas! why do I say *My*? Our Union would have healed feuds, in which blood had been shed by our fathers; it would have joined lands, broad and rich; it would have joined at least *one* heart, and two persons not ill-matched in years (she is two years my elder); and—and—and—what has been the result? *She* has married a man older than herself, been wretched, and separated. I have married, and am separated: and yet *We* are *not* united.

66

One of my notions, different from those of my co-temporaries, is, that the present is not a high age of English Poetry: there are *more* poets (soi-disant) than ever there were, and proportionally *less* poetry.

This *thesis* I have maintained for some years, but, strange to say, it meeteth not with favour from my brethren of the Shell. Even Moore shakes his head, and firmly believes that it is the grand Era of British Poesy.

67

When I belonged to the D. L. Committee,² and was one of the S. C. of Management, the number of plays upon the shelves were about *five* hundred. Conceiving that amongst these there must be *some* of merit, in person and by proxy I caused an investigation. I do not think that, of those which I saw, there was one which could be conscientiously tolerated. There never were such things as most of them.

Mathurin was very kindly recommended to me by Walter Scott, to whom I had recourse; firstly, in the hope that he would do something for us himself; and secondly, in my despair, that he would point out to us any young (or old) writer of promise. Mathurin sent his Bertram, and a letter *without* his address, so that at first I could give him no answer. When I at last hit upon his residence, I sent him a favourable answer, and something more substantial. His play succeeded, but I was at that time absent from England.

I tried Coleridge, too; but he had nothing feasible in hand at the time. Mr. Sotheby obligingly offered *all* his tragedies, and I pledged myself; and, notwithstanding many squabbles with my Committee[d] Brethren, did get 'Ivan' accepted, read, and the parts

¹ M. A. C. or M. C. (as she is called in an earlier jotting) was Mary Chaworth. Byron continued to cherish her memory, but displayed a curious reluctance to meet Mary Chaworth (or, as she latterly became, Mrs. Chaworth Musters) in real life.

² This was the Drury Lane Committee, on which Byron served—much to his own amusement and Lady Byron's distress—during his last year in London.

distributed. But lo! in the very heart of the matter, upon some tepid-ness on the part of Kean, or warmth on that of the Author, Sotheby withdrew his play.

Sir J. B. Burgess did also present four tragedies and a farce, and I moved Green-room and S. Committee; but they would not.

Then the Scenes I had to go through! The authors, and the authoresses, the Milliners, the wild Irishmen, the people from Brighton, from Blackwell, from Chatham, from Cheltenham, from Dublin, from Dundee, who came in upon me! To all of whom it was proper to give a civil answer, and a hearing, and a reading. Mrs. Glover's father, an Irish dancing-Master of Sixty years, called upon me to request to play '*Archer*', dressed in silk stockings on a frosty morning, to show his legs (which were certainly good and Irish for his age, and had been still better). Miss Emma Somebody, with a play entitled the '*Bandit of Bohemia*,' or some such title or production. Mr. O'Higgins then resident at Richmond, with an Irish tragedy, in which the unities could not fail to be observed, for the protagonist was chained by the leg to a pillar during the chief part of the performance. He was a wild man, of a salvage (*sic*) appearance; and the difficulty of *not* laughing at him was only to be got over by reflecting upon the probable consequences of such cachinnation.

As I am really a civil and polite person, and *do* hate giving pain, when it can be avoided, I sent them up to Douglas Kinnaird, who is a man of business, and sufficiently ready with a negative, and left them to settle with him. And, as at the beginning of next year, I went abroad, I have since been little aware of the progress of the theatres.

68

Players are said to be an impracticable people. They are so. But I managed to steer clear of any disputes with them, and, excepting one debate with the Elder Byrne about Miss Smith's *Pas de* (Something—I forget the technicals), I do not remember any litigation of my own. I used to protect Miss Smith, because she was like Lady Jane Harley in the face; and likenesses go a great way with me. Indeed, in general, I left such things to my more bustling colleagues, who used to reprove me seriously for not being able to take such things in hand without buffooning with the Histrions, and throwing things into confusion by treating light matters with levity.

69

Then the Committee!—then the Sub-Committee! We were but

few, and never agreed! There was Peter Moore who contradicted Kinnaird, and Kinnaird who contradicted everybody: then our two managers, Rae and Dibdin, and our Secretary, Ward! And yet we were all very zealous and in earnest to do good, and so forth. Hobhouse furnished us with prologues to our revived Old English plays, but was not pleased with me for complimenting him as 'the *Upton*' of our theatre (Mr. Upton is or was the poet who writes the songs for Astley's), and almost gave up prologuizing in consequence.

70

In the Pantomime of 1815-16, there was a Representation of the Masquerade of 1814, given by 'us Youth' of Watier's Club to Wellington and Co. Douglas Kinnaird, and one or two others with myself, put on Masques, and went *on* the Stage amongst the 'οἱ πολλοί', to see the effect of a theatre from the Stage. It is very grand. Douglas danced among the figuranti, too; and they were puzzled to find out who we were, as being more than their number. It was odd enough that D. K. and I should have been both at the *real* Masquerade, and afterwards in the Mimic one of the same on the stage of D. L. Theatre.

71

When I was a youth, I was reckoned a good actor. Besides 'Harrow Speeches' (in which I shone) I enacted 'Penruddock' in the 'Wheel of Fortune,' and 'Tristram Fickle' in Allingham's farce of 'the Weathercock,' for three nights (the duration of our compact), in some private theatricals at Southwell in 1806, with great applause. The occasional prologue for our volunteer play was also of my composition. The other performers were young ladies and gentlemen of the neighbourhood; and the whole went off with great effect upon our good-natured audience.

72

When I first went up to College, it was a new and a heavy hearted scene for me. Firstly, I so much disliked leaving Harrow, that, though it was time (I being seventeen), it broke my very rest for the last quarter with counting the days that remained. I always *hated* Harrow till the last year and half, but then I liked it. Secondly, I wished to go to Oxford and not to Cambridge. Thirdly, I was so completely alone in this new world, that it half broke my Spirits. My companions were not unsocial, but the contrary—lively, hospitable, of rank, and fortune, and gay far beyond my gaiety. I mingled with, and dined and supped, etc., with them; but, I know not how, it was one of the

deadliest and heaviest feelings of my life to feel that I was no longer a boy. From that moment I began to grow old in my own esteem; and in my esteem age is not estimable. I took my gradations in the vices with great promptitude, but they were not to my taste; for my early passions, though violent in the extreme, were concentrated, and hated division or spreading abroad. I could have left or lost the world with or for that which I loved; but, though my temperament was naturally burning, I could not share in the common place libertinism of the place and time without disgust. And yet this very disgust, and my heart thrown back upon itself, threw me into excesses perhaps more fatal than those from which I shrunk, as fixing upon one (at a time) the passions, which, spread amongst many, would have hurt only myself.

73

People have wondered at the Melancholy which runs through my writings. Others have wondered at my personal gaiety; but I recollect once, after an hour, in which I had been sincerely and particularly gay, and rather brilliant, in company, my wife replying to me when I said (upon her remarking my high spirits) 'and yet, Bell, I have been called and misnamed Melancholy—you must have seen how falsely, frequently.' 'No, B.,' (she answered) 'it is not so: at heart you are the most melancholy of mankind, and often when apparently gayest.'

74

If I could explain at length the *real* causes which have contributed to increase this perhaps *natural* temperament of mine, this Melancholy which hath made me a bye-word, nobody would wonder; but this is impossible without doing much mischief. I do not know what other men's lives have been, but I cannot conceive anything more strange than some of the earlier parts of mine. I have written my memoirs, but omitted *all* the really *consequential* and *important* parts, from deference to the dead, to the living, and to those who must be both.

75

I sometimes think that I should have written the *whole* as a *lesson*, but it might have proved a *lesson* to be *learnt* rather than *avoided*; for passion is a whirlpool, which is not to be viewed nearly without attraction from its Vortex.

76

I must not go on with these reflections, or I shall be letting out some secret or other to paralyze posterity.

One night, Scrope Davies at a gaming house (before I was of age), being tipsy as he usually was at the Midnight hour, and having lost monies, was in vain intreated by his friends, one degree less intoxicated than himself, to come or go home. In despair, he was left to himself, and to the demons of the dice-box. Next day, being visited, about two of the Clock, by some friends just risen with a severe headache and empty pockets (who had left him losing at four or five in the morning), he was found in a sound sleep, without a night-cap, and not particularly encumbered with bed-cloathes: a Chamber-pot stood by his bed-side, *brim-full* of — *Bank Notes!* all won, God knows how, and crammed, Scrope knew not where; but *there* they were, all good legitimate notes, and to the amount of some thousand pounds.

At Brighthelmstone (I love orthography at length), in the year 1808, Hobhouse, Scrope Davies, Major Cooper, and myself, having dined together with Lord Delvin, Count (I forget the french Emigrant nomenclature) and others, did about the middle of the night (we *four*) proceed to a house of Gambling, being then *amongst us* possesst of about *twenty guineas* of ready cash, with which we had to maintain as many of your whorson horses and servants, besides house-hold and whore-hold expediture. We had, I say, twenty guineas or so, and we lost them, returning home in bad humour. Cooper went home. Scrope and Hobhouse and I (it being high Summer), did firstly strip and plunge into the Sea, whence, after half an hour's swimming of those of us (Scrope and I) who could swim, we emerged in our dressing-gowns to discuss a bottle or two of Champagne and Hock (according to choice) at our quarters. In course of this discussion, words arose; Scrope seized H. by the throat; H. seized a knife in self-defence, and stabbed Scrope in the shoulder to avoid being throttled. Scrope fell bathed in blood and wine—for the *bottle* fell with him, being infinitely intoxicated with Gaming, Sea-bathing at two in the morning, and Supplementary Champagne. The skirmish had past before I had time or thought to interfere. Of course I lectured against gambling—

Pugnare Thracum est,

and then examined Scrope's wound, which proved to be a gash long and broad, but not deep nor dangerous. Scrope was furious:

first he wanted to fight, then to go away in a post-chaise, and then to *shoot* himself, which latter intention I offered to forward, provided that he did not use *my pistols*, which, in case of suicide, would become a deo-dand to the King. At length, with many oaths and some difficulty, he was gotten to bed. In the morning, Cool reflection and a Surgeon came, and, by dint of loss of blood, and sticking plaister, the quarrel (which Scrope had begun), was healed as well as the wound, and we were all friends as for years before and after.

79

My first dash into poetry was as early as 1800. It was the ebullition of a passion for my first Cousin Margaret Parker (daughter and grand-daughter of the two Admirals Parker), one of the most beautiful of evanescent beings. I have long forgotten the verses, but it would be difficult for me to forget her. Her dark eyes! her long eyelashes! her completely Greek cast of face and figure! I was then about twelve—She rather older, perhaps a year. She died about a year or two afterwards, in consequence of a fall which injured her spine and induced consumption. Her Sister, Augusta (by some thought still more beautiful), died of the same malady; and it was indeed in attending her that Margaret met with the accident, which occasioned her own death. My Sister told me that, when she went to see her shortly before her death, upon accidentally mentioning my name, Margaret coloured through the paleness of mortality to the eyes, to the great astonishment of my Sister, who (residing with her Grandmother, Lady Holderness) saw at that time but little of me for family reasons, knew nothing of our attachment, nor could conceive why my name should affect her at such a time. I knew nothing of her illness (being at Harrow and in the country), till she was gone.

Some years after, I made an attempt at an Elegy. A very dull one. I do not recollect scarcely any thing equal to the *transparent* beauty of my cousin, or to the sweetness of her temper, during the short period of our intimacy. She looked as if she had been made out of a rainbow—all beauty and peace.

My passion had its usual effects upon me: I could not sleep, could not eat; I could not rest; and although I had reason to know that she loved me, it was the torture of my life to think of the time which must elapse before we could meet again—being usually about *twelve hours* of separation! But I was a fool then, and am not much wiser now.

80

My passions were developed very early—so early, that few would believe me, if I were to state the period, and the facts which accompanied it. Perhaps this was one of the reasons which caused the anticipated melancholy of my thoughts—having anticipated life.

My earlier poems are the thoughts of one at least ten years older than the age at which they were written: I don't mean for their solidity, but their Experience. The two first Cantos of *Ce. Hd.* were completed at twenty two, and they are written as if by a man older than I shall probably ever be.

[81 omitted by Byron]

82

Upon Parnassus, going to the fountain of Delphi (Castri), in 1809, I saw a flight of twelve Eagles (Hobhouse says they are Vultures—at least in conversation), and I seized the Omen. On the day before, I composed the lines to Parnassus (in *Childe Harold*), and, on beholding the birds, had a hope that Apollo had accepted my homage. I have at least had the name and fame of a Poet during the poetical period of life (from twenty to thirty): whether it will last is another matter; but I *have been* a votary of the Deity and the place, and am grateful for what he has done in my behalf, leaving the future in his hands—as I left the past.

83

Like Sylla, I have always believed that all things depend upon Fortune, and nothing upon ourselves. I am not aware of any one thought or action worthy of being called good to myself or others, which is not to be attributed to the Good Goddess, Fortune!

84

Two or three years ago, I thought of going to one of the Americas, English or Spanish. But the accounts sent from England, in consequence of my enquiries, discouraged me. After all, I believe most countries, properly balanced, are equal to a *Stranger* (by no means to the *native*, though). I remembered General Ludlow's domal inscription:—

Omne solum forti patria—

And sat down free in a country of Slavery for many centuries. But

there is *no* freedom, even for *Masters*, in the midst of slaves: it makes my blood boil to see the thing. I sometimes wish that I was the Owner of Africa, to do at once, what Wilberforce will do in time, viz.—sweep Slavery from her desarts, and look on upon the first dance of their Freedom.

As to *political* slavery—so general—it is man's own fault; if they *will* be slaves, let them! Yet it is but 'a word and a blow.' See how England formerly, France, Spain, Portugal, America, Switzerland, freed themselves! There is no one instance of a *long* contest, in which *men* did not triumph over Systems. If Tyranny misses her *first* spring, she is cowardly as the tiger, and retires to be hunted.

85

An Italian (the younger Count Ruota), writing from Ravenna to his friend at Rome in 1820, says of me, by way of compliment, 'that in society no one would take me for an Englishman, though he believes that I *am* English at bottom—my manners were so different.' This he meant as a grand eulogy, and I accept it as such. The letter was shown to me this year by the Correspondent, Count P. G., or by his Sister.

86

I have been a reviewer. In 'the Monthly Review' I wrote some articles, which were inserted. This was in the latter part of 1811. In 1807, in a Magazine called 'Monthly Literary Recreations,' I reviewed Wordsworth's trash of that time. Excepting these, I cannot accuse myself of anonymous Criticism (that I recollect), though I have been *offered* more than one review in our principal Journals.

87

Till I was eighteen years old (odd as it may seem), I had never read a review. But, while at Harrow, my general information was so great on modern topics, as to induce a suspicion that I could only collect so much information from *reviews*, because I was never *seen* reading, but always idle and in mischief, or at play. The truth is that I read eating, read in bed, read when no one else reads; and had read all sorts of reading since I was five years old, and yet never *met* with a review, which is the only reason that I know of why I should not have read them. But it is true; for I remember when Hunter and Curzon, in 1804, told me this opinion at Harrow, I made them laugh by my ludicrous astonishment in asking them, '*what is a review?*' To be sure, they were then less common. In three years

more, I was better acquainted with that same, but the first I ever read was in 1806-7.


88

At School, I was (as I have said) remarked for the extent and readiness of my *general* information; but in all other respects idle; capable of great sudden exertions (such as thirty or forty Greek Hexameters—of course with such prosody as it pleased God), but of few continuous drudgeries. My qualities were much more oratorical and martial, than poetical; and Dr. D., my grand patron (our head-master), had a great notion that I should turn out an Orator, from my fluency, my turbulence, my voice, my copiousness of declamation, and my action. I remember that my first declamation astonished him into some unwonted (for he was economical of such), and sudden compliments, before the declaimers at our first rehearsal. My first Harrow verses (that is, English as exercises), a translation of a chorus from the Prometheus of Aeschylus, were received by him but coolly: no one had the least notion that I should subside into poesy.

89

Peel, the Orator and Statesman ('that was, or is, or is to be'), was my form fellow, and we were both at the top of our remove (a public School Phrase). We were on good terms, but his brother was my intimate friend. There were always great hopes of Peel amongst us all—Masters and Scholars, and he has not disappointed them. As a Scholar, he was greatly my superior: as a declaimer, and Actor, I was reckoned at least his equal. As a school boy *out* of school, I was always *in* scrapes, and *he never*; and *in School* he *always* knew his lesson, and I rarely; but when I knew it, I knew it nearly as well. In general information, history, etc. etc., I think I was *his* Superior, as also of most boys of my standing.

89 [twice]

The prodigy of our School days was George Sinclair (son of Sir John): he made exercises for half the School (*literally*), verses at will, and themes without it. When in the Shell, he made exercises for his Uncle, Dudley Macdonald (a dunce who could only play upon the flute), in the sixth. He was a friend of mine, and in the same remove, and used at times to beg me to let him do my exercise—a request always most readily accorded, upon a pinch, or when I wanted to do something else, which was usually once an hour. On the other hand, he was pacific, and I savage; so I fought for him.  thrashed

others for him, or thrashed himself to make him thrash others, whom it was necessary, as a point of honour and stature, that he should so chastise. Or, we talked politics, for he was a great politician, and were very good friends. I have some of his letters, written to me from School, still.

90

Clayton was another School Monster of learning, and talent, and hope; but what has become of him I do not know: he was certainly a Genius.

91

My School friendships were with *me passions* (for I was always violent), but I do not know that there is one which has endured (to be sure, some have been cut short by death) till now. That with Lord Clare began one of the earliest and lasted longest, being only interrupted by distance, that I know of. I never hear the word '*Clare*' without a beating of the heart even *now*, and I write it with the feelings of 1803-4-5 ad infinitum.

92

In 1812, at Middelton (Lord Jersey's), amongst a goodly company of Lords, Ladies, and wits, etc., there was poor old Vice Leach, the lawyer, attempting to play off the fine gentleman. His first exhibition—an attempt on horseback, I think, to escort the women—God knows where, in the month of November, ended in a fit of the Lumbago—as Lord Ogleby says, 'a grievous enemy to Gallantry and address'—and if he could but have heard Lady Jersey quizzing him (as I did) next day for the *cause* of his malady, I don't think that he would have turned a 'Squire of dames' in a hurry again. He seemed to me the greatest fool (in that line) I ever saw. This was the last I saw of old Vice Leach, except in town, where he was creeping into assemblies, and trying to look young and gentlemanly.

93

Erskine too! Erskine was there—good, but intolerable. He jested, he talked, he did every thing admirably, but then he *would* be applauded for the same thing twice over: he would read his own verses, his own paragraphs, and tell his own story, again and again—and then 'the trial by Jury!!!' I almost wished it abolished, for I sat next him at dinner. As I had read his published speeches, there was no occasion to repeat them to me.

Chester (the fox hunter), surnamed '*Cheeks Chester*,' and I sweated

the Claret, being the only two who did so. Cheeks, who loves his bottle, and had no notion of meeting with a 'bon vivant' in a scribbler, in making my eulogy to somebody one evening, summed it up in—'By G—d, he *drinks like a Man!*'

94

Nobody drank, however, but Cheeks and I. To be sure, there was little occasion, for we swept off what was on the table (a most splendid board, as may be supposed, at Jersey's) very sufficiently. However, we carried our liquor discreetly, like 'the Baron of Bradwardine.'

95

If I had to live over again, I do not know what I would change in my life, unless it were *for not to have lived at all*. All history and experience, and the rest, teaches us that the good and evil are pretty equally balanced in this existence, and that what is most to be desired is an easy passage out of it.

What can it give us but *years*? and those have little of good but their ending.

96

Of the Immortality of the Soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt, if we attend for a moment to the action of Mind. It is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. It acts also so very independent of body: in dreams for instance incoherently and madly, I grant you; but still it is *Mind*, and much more *Mind* than when we are awake. Now, that *this* should not act *separately*, as well as jointly, who can pronounce? The Stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state 'a Soul which drags a Carcase:' a heavy chain, to be sure; but all chains, being material, may be shaken off.

How far our future life will be individual, or, rather, how far it will at all resemble our *present* existence, is another question; but that the *Mind* is *eternal*, seems as probable as that the body is not so. Of course, I have ventured upon the question without recurring to Revelation, which, however, is at least as rational a solution of it as any other.

A *material* resurrection seems strange, and even absurd, except for purposes of punishment; and all punishment, which is to *revenge* rather than *correct*, must be *morally wrong*. And *when the World is at an end*, what moral or warning purpose *can* eternal tortures answer? Human passions have probably disfigured the divine doctrines here,

but the whole thing is inscrutable. It is useless to tell me *not to reason*, but to *believe*. You might as well tell a man not to wake but *sleep*. And then to *bully* with torments! and all that! I cannot help thinking that the *menace* of Hell makes as many devils, as the severe penal codes of inhuman humanity make villains.

Man is born *passionate* of body, but with an innate though secret tendency to the love of Good in his Mainspring of Mind. But God help us all! It is at present a sad jar of atoms.

97

Matter is eternal, always changing, but reproduced, and, as far as we can comprehend Eternity, Eternal; and why not *Mind*? Why should not the Mind act with and upon the Universe? as portions of it act upon and with the congregated dust called Mankind? See, how one man acts upon himself and others, or upon multitudes? The same Agency, in a higher and purer degree, may act upon the Stars, etc., ad infinitum.

98

I have often been inclined to Materialism in philosophy but could never bear its introduction into *Christianity*, which appears to me essentially founded upon the *Soul*. For this reason, Priestley's Christian Materialism always struck me as deadly. Believe the resurrection of the body, if you will, but *not without* a *Soul*. The devil's in it, if, after having had a Soul (as surely the *Mind*, or whatever you call it, *is*) in this world, we must part with it in the next, even for an Immortal Materiality. I own my partiality for *Spirit*.

99

I am always most religious upon a sun-shiny day; as if there was some association between an internal approach to greater light and purity, and the kindler of this dark lanthorn of our external existence.

100

The Night is also a religious concern; and even more so, when I viewed the Moon and Stars through Herschell's telescope, and saw that they were worlds.

101

If, according to some speculations, you could prove the World many thousand years older than the Mosaic Chronology, or if you

could knock up Adam and Eve and the Apple and Serpent, still what is to be put up in their stead? or how is the difficulty removed? Things must have had a beginning, and what matters it *when* or *how*?

I sometimes think that *Man* may be the relic of some higher material being, wrecked in a former world, and degenerated in the hardships and struggle through Chaos into Conformity—or something like it; as we see Laplanders, Esquimaux, etc., inferior in the present state, as the Elements become more inexorable. But even then this higher pre-Adamite supposition's Creation must have had an Origin and a *Creator*; for a *Creator* is a more natural imagination than a fortuitous concourse of atoms. All things remount to a fountain, though they may flow to an Ocean.

102

What a strange thing is the propagation of life! A bubble of Seed . . . might (for aught we know) have formed a Caesar or a Buona-partè: there is nothing remarkable recorded of their Sires, that I know of.

103

Lord Kames has said (if I misquote not), 'that a power to call up agreeable ideas at will would be something greater for mortals than all the boons of a fairy tale.'

I have found increasing upon me (without sufficient cause at times) the depression of Spirits (with few intervals), which I have some reason to believe constitutional or inherited.

104

Plutarch says, in his life of Lysander, that Aristotle observes, 'that in general great Geniuses are of a melancholy turn, and instances Socrates, Plato, and Hercules (or Heracleitus), as examples, and Lysander, though not *while* young, yet as inclined to it when approaching towards age.' Whether I am a Genius or not, I have been called such by my friends as well as enemies, and in more countries and languages than one, and also within a no very long period of existence. Of my Genius, I can say nothing, but of my melancholy, that it is 'increasing and ought to be diminished'—but how?

105

I take it that most men are so at bottom, but that it is only remarked in the remarkable. The Duchesse de Broglie, in reply to a remark of mine on the errors of clever people, said, 'that they were

not worse than others, only being more in view, more noted; especially in all that could reduce them to the rest, or raise the rest to them.' In 1816, this was.

106

In fact (I suppose that), if the follies of fools were all set down like those of the wise, the wise (who seem at present only a better sort of fools), would appear almost intelligent.

107

I have met George Colman occasionally, and thought him extremely pleasant and convivial. Sheridan's humour, or rather wit, was always saturnine, and sometimes savage: he never laughed (at least that I saw, and I watched him), but Colman did. I have got very drunk with them both; but, if I had to *choose*, and could not have both at a time, I should say, 'let me begin the evening with Sheridan, and finish it with Colman.' Sheridan for dinner—Colman for supper. Sheridan for Claret or port; but Colman for every thing, from the Madeira and Champagne at dinner—the Claret with a *layer of port* between the Glasses—up to the Punch of the Night, and down to the Grog or Gin and water of day-break. All these I have threaded with both the same. Sheridan was a Grenadier Company of Life-Guards, but Colman a whole regiment—of *light Infantry*, to be sure, but still a *regiment*.

108

Alcibiades is said to have been 'successful in all his battles;' but *what* battles? Name them! If you mention Caesar, or Annibal, or Napoleon, you at once rush upon Pharsalia, Munda, Alesia, Cannae, Thrasimene, Trebia, Lodi, Marengo, Jena, Austerlitz, Friedland, Wagram, Moskwa; but it is less easy to pitch upon the victories of Alcibiades, though they may be named too—though not so readily as the Leuctra and Mantinea of Epaminondas, the Marathon of Miltiades, the Salamis of Themistocles, and the Thermopylae of Leonidas.

Yet upon the whole it may be doubted, whether there be a name of Antiquity, which comes down with such a general charm as that of *Alcibiades*. *Why?* I cannot answer: who can?

109

The vanity of Victories is considerable. Of all who fell at Waterloo

or Trafalgar, ask any man in company to *name you ten off hand*: they will stick at Nelson; the other will survive himself. *Nelson was a hero*: the other is a mere Corporal, dividing with Prussians and Spaniards the luck, which he never deserved. He even—but I hate the fool, and will be silent.

110

The Miscreant Wellington is the Cub of Fortune, but she will never lick him into shape: if he lives, he will be beaten—that's certain. Victory was never before wasted upon such an unprofitable soil, as this dunghill of Tyranny, whence nothing springs but Viper's eggs.

111

I remember seeing Blucher in the London Assemblies, and never saw anything of his age less venerable. With the voice and manners of a recruiting Sergeant, he pretended to the honours of a hero; just as if a stone could be worshipped, because a Man had stumbled over it.

112

There is nothing left for Mankind but a Republic, and I think that there are hopes of such. The two Americas (South and North) have it; Spain and Portugal approach it; all thirst for it. Oh Washington!

113

Pisa, Novr. 5th, 1821

"There is a strange coincidence sometimes in the little things of this world, Sancho," says Sterne in a letter (if I mistake not); and so I have often found it.

Page 128 [678], article 91, of this collection of scattered things, I had alluded to my friend Lord Clare in terms such as my feelings suggested. About a week or two afterwards, I met him on the road between Imola and Bologna, after not having met for seven or eight years. He was abroad in 1814, and came home just as I set out in 1816.

This meeting annihilated for a moment all the years between the present time and the days of *Harrow*. It was a new and inexplicable feeling, like rising from the grave, to me. Clare, too, was much agitated—*more* in appearance than even myself; for I could feel his heart beat to his fingers' ends, unless, indeed, it was the pulse of my own which made me think so. He told me that I should find a note from him, left at Bologna. I did. We were obliged to part for our different journeys—he for Rome, I for Pisa; but with the promise

to meet again in Spring. We were but five minutes together, and in the public road; but I hardly recollect an hour of my existence which could be weighed against them. He had heard that I was coming on, and had left his letter for me at B., because the people with whom he was travelling could not wait longer.

Of all I have ever known, he has always been the least altered in every thing from the excellent qualities and kind affections which attached me to him so strongly at School. I should hardly have thought it possible for Society (or the World as it is called), to leave a being with so little of the leaven of bad passions. I do not speak from personal experiences only, but from all I have ever heard of him from others during absence and distance.

114

I met with Rogers at Bologna: staid a day there, crossed the Appennines with him. He remained at Florence; I went on to Pisa—8bre. 29, 30th etc., 1821.

115

I re-visited the Florence Gallery, etc. My former impressions were confirmed; but there were too many visitors there, to allow me to *feel* any thing properly. When we were (about thirty or forty) all stuffed into the Cabinet of Gems, and knick-knackeries, in a corner of one of the Galleries, I told R. that it 'felt like being in the Watch-house.' I left him to make his obeisances to some of his acquaintances, and strolled on alone—the only few minutes I could snatch of any feeling for the works around me. I do not mean to apply this to a *tête à tête* scrutiny with Rogers, who has an excellent taste and deep feeling for the Arts (indeed much more of both than I can possess; for of the *former* I have not much); but to the crowd of jostling starers and travelling talkers around me.

I heard one bold Briton declare to the woman on his arm, looking at the Venus of Titian, 'Well, now, this is really very fine indeed,'—an observation, which, like that of the landlord in Joseph Andrews 'on the certainty of death,' was (as the landlord's wife observed), 'extremely true.'

In the Pitti palace, I did not omit Goldsmith's prescription for a Connoisseur, viz: 'that the pictures would have been better, if the painter had taken more pains, and to praise the works of Pietro Perugino.

116

I have lately been reading Fielding over again. They talk of Radicalism, Jacobinism, etc., in England (I am told), but they should turn over the pages of 'Jonathan Wild the Great.' The inequality of conditions, and the littleness of the great, were never set forth in stronger terms; and his contempt for Conquerors and the like is such, ~~that~~ had he lived *now*, he would have been denounced in 'the Courier' as the grand Mouthpiece and Factionary of the revolutionists. And yet I never recollect to have heard this turn of Fielding's mind noticed, though it is obvious in every page.

117

The following dialogue passed between me and a very pretty peasant Girl (Rosa Benini, married to Domenico Ovioli, or Oviuoli, the Vetturino) at Ravenna.

Rosa. 'What is the Pope?'

I. 'Don't *you* know?'

Rosa. 'No, I don't know. What or who is he? Is he a *Saint*?'

I. 'He is an old man.'

Rosa. 'What nonsense to make such a fuss about an old man. Have you ever seen him?'

I. 'Yes, at Rome.'

Rosa. 'You English don't obey the Pope?'

I. 'No, we don't; but you do.'

Rosa. 'I don't know what I believe, but the priests talk about him. I am sure I did not know what he was.'

This dialogue I have translated nearly verbatim, and I don't think that I have either added to or taken away from it. The speaker was under eighteen, and an old acquaintance of mine. It struck me as odd that I should have to instruct her *who* the Pope was: I think they might have found it out without me by this time. The fact is indisputable, and occurred but a few weeks ago, before I left Ravenna.

Pisa, Novr. 6th, 1821

*Oh! talk not to me of a name great in story
The days of our Youth are the days of our Glory
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two and twenty
Are worth all your laurels though ever so plenty.*

2

*What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled:
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary,
What care I for the wreaths that can only give Glory?*

3

*Oh! Fame! if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear One discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.*

4

*There chiefly I sought thee, there only I found thee;
Her Glance was the best of the rays that surround thee,
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was Glory.*

I composed these stanzas (except the fourth added now) a few days ago, on the road from Florence to Pisa.

Pisa, Novr. 6th, 1821

119

My daughter Ada, on her recent birthday the other day (the 10th of December 1821), completed her sixth year. Since she was a Month old, or rather better, I have not seen her. But I hear that she is a fine child, with a violent temper.

I have been thinking of an odd circumstance. My daughter, my wife, my half sister, my mother, my sister's mother, my natural daughter, and myself, are or were all *only* children. My sister's Mother (Lady Conyers) had only my half sister by that second

marriage (herself too an only child), and my father had only me (an only child) by his second marriage with my Mother (an only child too). Such a complication of *only* children, all tending to *one family*, is singular enough, and looks like fatality almost. But the fiercest Animals have the rarest numbers in their litters, as Lions, tigers, and even Elephants which are mild in comparison.

May 18th, 1822

I have not taken up this sort of Journal for many months: shall I continue it? 'Chi cosa?'

I have written little this year, but a good deal last (1821). *Five* plays in all (two yet unpublished), some Cantos, etc. I have begun one or two things since, but under some discouragement, or rather indignation at the brutality of the attacks, which I hear (for I have seen but few of them) have been multiplied in every direction against me and my recent writings. But the English dishonour themselves more than me by such conduct. It is strange, but the Germans say that I am more popular in Germany by far than in England, and I have heard the Americans say as much of America. The French, too, have printed a considerable number of translations—in prose! with good success; but *their* predilection (if it exists) depends, I suspect, upon their belief that I have no great passion for England or the English. It would be singular if I had; however, I wish them no harm.